

Incineration: pro and con

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The opponents say:

- using incineration could discourage waste diversion -- not only that, but the incinerator must be fed 24/7, and that means having a constant stream of waste, which could mean taking on garbage from other municipalities
- the safety is questionable -- there are many studies that are either inconclusive or draw negative conclusions, the issue of nanoparticulates and toxins is not properly addressed and some other Ontario regions, after looking at the information and public opinion, have decided against incineration
- Clarington is not being listened to, with the three Regional councillors not carrying forward the message of the majority of council -- specifically, the four local councillors who tend to vote as a block -- to the Region
- the process has been dubious: the two consultants used -- one which recommended thermal treatment as the preferred method of dealing with waste, the other which did a number of studies, including the generic human health and environmental risk study -- are members of a group registered with the Province to lobby for energy-from-waste; too few alternatives were considered; the Region has interfered in Clarington's ability to peer review all the information by withholding reports; the public meetings on siting discourage participation by holding the formal presentations and question and answer session too late at night

The proponents say:

- there has been plenty of public consultation, with dozens of public meetings held since Durham began looking at its waste management plan, given the hard stance taken by the Region against opening new landfill here, in the 1990s
- many European countries and some areas in Ontario, are using incineration, and it's working well and in conjunction with strong diversion practices
- there is little choice but to go with incineration, since Michigan will close its borders in 2010 to Ontario's trash -- time, therefore, is of the essence
- studies have shown new scrubbing technology to be relatively safe and it will be a matter of using the right technology at the correct site that will ensure the safety of an incinerator built in Durham
- the process has been open and fair and has come to a reasonable conclusion. In fact, said Cliff Curtis, Durham's Works director, at a recent joint Waste Management Committee meeting, "the lines of communication have not been cut, but no matter what we do, it's quite likely that we will have some people who object to the process because they are not getting the answers that they want."