

Preferred site for incinerator approved

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The regional councils for Durham and York have endorsed a Clarington site, near Courtice Road south of Hwy. 401, as the preferred location for a proposed garbage incinerator.

Durham's vote came at about 11 p.m. last Wednesday, 13 hours after a council meeting began, and passed in a 19-7 vote. Both of Brock's regional representatives -- Mayor Larry O'Connor and regional councillor John Grant -- voted in favour of the site.

The Ministry of Environment and the Province of Ontario still need to approve the site. "Putting it off any longer doesn't solve the problem," said Mayor O'Connor.

"It was the right decision at the end of the day."

The vote came after a marathon meeting which included almost nine hours of presentations from the public with the vast majority of more than 30 speakers opposed to incineration.

Coleen Fodor, a Newcastle resident, had tears in her eyes as she described the medications her two youngest children must take for their asthma. She blames the air quality in the region for her children's ailments.

"The impact this incinerator will have on my children's health will be devastating," she said.

But councillors also heard a strong case in favour of the technology.

Magnus Schonning, first secretary to the Embassy of Sweden, said his country has at least 29 incinerators, some of them located in residential neighbourhoods. Mr. Schonning said incineration has lower net carbon emissions than landfilling and that toxic emissions from incinerators have dropped dramatically in recent years.

For example, he said, more dioxins are released by random fires at landfills than through incineration.

York's vote came Thursday and in contrast to the marathon meeting in Durham, site selection went through York's council quickly, with no members of the public commenting on the issue.