

Globe and Mail

WASTE-DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

[Ontario to explore turning trash into energy](#)

STEVE RENNIE

The Canadian Press/Globe and Mail

February 20, 2008

OTTAWA -- The Ontario government wants to get garbage onto the grid.

The Environment Ministry said yesterday it is looking at a two-pronged approach that would turn trash destined for landfills into energy.

The ministry posted a request for proposals this week to study the environmental impacts of two technologies: plasma gasification and a system that captures methane gas from garbage dumps. The systems could curb landfill waste while generating power.

The province wants to know which of the two waste-disposal systems leaves the smallest environmental footprint, said Minnie de Jong, manager of the ministry's human toxicology and air standards division.

"Energy from waste is obviously an attractive proposal because it not only deals with waste, but it produces energy and therefore helps meet energy needs," she said in an interview yesterday.

Plasma gasification superheats gases to vaporize garbage and produce power, while the gas-capturing landfill system takes methane gas emitted from garbage and turns it into energy.

"The main drawback of these technologies has been the cost," said Roberto Narbaitz, a civil engineering professor at the University of Ottawa.

The Environment Ministry's study will only examine the environmental impact of the two systems and won't look at cost, Ms. de Jong said.