

Zero waste better than incineration, say environmentalists

Thu Jun 12, 2008

Rachel Calvelli

DURHAM -- God recycles and the devil burns, said Green Party of Ontario leader Frank de Jong during a recent Durham visit to address the issue of incineration.

"That's my religious message for you today and I hope I don't offend anyone," he added, speaking to roughly 25 people at the Whitby library last week.

Mr. de Jong joined Durham environmentalists for the local release of a report called Stop Trashing the Climate, which advocates a zero waste approach to garbage, rather than using landfills or incineration. The report was authored by an international group of non-governmental organizations.

The idea is to stop the issues before they begin, starting with the companies that produce the packaging.

"Everything has to be designed so it doesn't end up in landfill," Mr. de Jong said, adding there's no reason to produce anything that can't be reused, composted or recycled.

Also present at the event, voicing their opposition to incineration, were CAW Durham Regional Environment Council president and New Democrat Dave Renaud and Bryan Ransom, the federal Liberal candidate for the Durham riding, currently held by Bev Oda. NDP MPP Peter Tabuns also sent a letter of support and his regrets for not attending.

Mr. Tabuns wrote he encourages the efforts of those stopping incineration in Durham and also feels it is a fundamental error to waste resources by incinerating them when they could be recycled.

Those attending the event all said incineration uses up valuable resources and is more expensive than simply not producing waste.

Among them was Markham Councillor Erin Shapero. She said the provincial and federal governments need to get on board with a zero waste plan. Ms. Shapero said Markham is leading the way with 70 per cent of its waste being directed away from landfills and being recycled or composted and greater diversion rates planned in the coming years.

"In Markham we've decided going zero waste is the best way to a cleaner, greener future," she said.

Mr. de Jong said he didn't care which political party stopped incineration. "We have a moral and ethical responsibility to leave a clean planet to future generations," he said, adding the way to provide this change is through producing environmentally friendly products that don't need to be incinerated.



Ron Pietroniro / Metroland WHITBY-- Dave Renaud, the environmental representative of the CAW and Frank de Jong, the leader of the Green Party of Ontario, discuss the newly released report on climate change. The report entitled Stop Trashing The Climate details the impact of the global climate change. June 5, 2008.

Stop Trashing the Climate Recommendations

The report, authored by a group of non-governmental environmental organizations, had 12 key recommendations. The full report is online at www.stoptrashingtheclimate.org.

- Establish zero waste targets and plans among all levels of government
- Retire existing incinerators and halt the construction of new ones and landfills
- Levy a per-ton surcharge on landfilled and incinerated materials
- Stop organic materials from being sent to landfills and incinerators
- End renewable energy government subsidies to landfills and incinerators
- Provide policy incentives for reuse, recycling and composting jobs
- Pay-as-you-throw fees for the collection of trash
- Make manufacturers responsible for the products and packaging they use
- Regulate single-use plastic products and packaging
- Regulate paper packaging and junk mail
- Reject climate protection agreements that include landfill and incineration
- Better assess the climate implications of waste

-- With files from Reka Szekely