

Energy-from-waste plan stalled

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A proposed methane plant that would turn the Peterborough landfill's greenhouse gas emissions into electricity received a financial boost from the province this month.

But as the Ontario government works to pass the Green Energy Act designed to encourage energy-from-waste projects, proposals like the one planned for the Bensfort Road dump have been stalled, The Examiner has learned.

Peterborough Utilities has proposed to build and operate the power generating facility at the landfill, which is coowned by the city and county.

"We will be designing and building and financing the generation site and we will be paying for any expansion of the gas gathering system to make it more efficient for generation," Peterborough Utilities president and CEO Larry Doran explained.

"Currently the methane gas that comes off the landfill is [flared...it](#)'s gathered up and burned. What we'd be doing is making use of that [gas...to](#) create electricity."

The city and county would receive a share of the profits from the sale of the electricity to the province.

"We will be paying them a royalty based on the amount of generation produced," Doran said.

On April 14, the province gave the city and county \$705,650 to contribute to the design and construction of the methane collection system, Peterborough MPP Jeff Leal said.

That provincial money will reduce some of Peterborough Utilities' capital costs and in return increase the share of profits coming to the city and county, Mayor Paul Ayotte said.

"With the cost sharing formula that was put in [place...if](#) the capital costs are lower, the percentage coming to the city and the county would change a bit. That's my understanding of it," Ayotte said.

But the entire project has been put on hold, Doran said. Expected changes to rules and regulations governing such facilities have created a freeze on new projects, he said.

"There's no start date. We have to wait until the Green Energy Act and the resulting rules come off," he said. "Until they had brought in the Green Energy Act, we had hoped to be almost started by now."

"We won't be able to get final approval to proceed probably for quite a few months."

The province is doing its best to speed up the process, Leal said.

"We'll be doing everything possible to expedite the regulations that will be associated with this act because there is such a pent-up demand across the province of Ontario to get many of these projects on stream and create employment opportunities," Leal said. "I can certainly see the regulations for this particular act being put in place as quickly as possible to get these projects initiated and completed."

Doran said he doesn't expect any movement on the project until fall.

A study done by an engineering and consulting firm, Conestoga-Rovers and Associates, found a 0.925- megawatt generator could produce \$6,861,000 in profit, above construction and operating costs, through the 20-year life of the facility.

About 1.4 million tonnes of solid garbage has been dumped at the south fill area of the landfill since 1980.

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