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Incineration cheaper than landfill: report

UOIT professor raises some questions

By Reka Szekely
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DURHAM — Although it would cost more up front, incinerating Durham's garbage is the best available long-term option, says the Region's business case for the project.

The business case, released Friday, compares energy-from-waste (EFW) to using a landfill site outside the region, somewhere in Ontario. The EFW project comes out ahead, according to the financial analysis by Deloitte and Touche, because it removes the risk and uncertainty surrounding fuel costs and the shortage of landfill capacity in the province.

"What it will do is bring a solution to the waste disposal situation on a long-term basis," said Jim Clapp, the Region's commissioner of finance.

And a UOIT professor said the report was acceptable though he had a few questions.

The facility, which would be located in Clarington near Courtice Road and Hwy. 401, would cost \$198 million to construct with Durham Region picking up \$155 million of the tab and York Region paying the rest. The facility, accepting 140,000 tonnes of waste per year, would be state-of-the-art, meeting or exceeding both Ontario's guidelines and European Union emission standards.

The annual operating and maintenance cost of the facility would be \$17 million with Durham paying \$13 million of that. Among the operation costs is just less than \$1 million in property taxes; two-thirds of which would go to the Municipality of Clarington, Mr. Clapp said.

If federal gas tax funds are used to pay a portion of the up-front costs, the Region's debt related to the facility would be paid off in six years. That means by 2017 on, the cost of incineration would be lower than using landfill somewhere else, the report said. If the gas tax is not used and the facility is fully funded through debt financing, it would take

until after 2031 for the cost of incineration to be lower than landfill.

Previously, the Region has used gas tax dollars to fund its material recovery facility. Durham will bank \$47 million in gas tax dollars from 2008 through to 2010, which could

be used as an up-front payment on the EFW facility, Mr. Clapp said. Beyond that, the Region would budget \$16.5 million per year for the incinerator.

"The gas tax can only be used in certain areas, waste is one of them," Mr. Clapp said,

and added regional municipalities cannot use it for roads.

Overall, the finance commissioner said EFW would be a much more predictable

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RIDING COAST TO COAST FOR CANCER



AJAX — Stephanie Lawrence from Ajax High School is cheered on by her teammates, Lianne Tilly and Kiah Price in the last few seconds of her ride during the Inside Ride and Coast to Coast Against Cancer event held at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate recently. The event, which saw 17 teams from J. Clarke and Ajax High School participate, raised \$5,400.

Jason Liebrechts/ News Advertiser photo



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