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Durham Region unveils plans that could put 850,000 tonnes of garbage into Brock dump site

Despite a public outcry and repeated demands to close the Brock dump located just east of Port Bolster, the Region of Durham is expected to ask the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) to approve a plan to expand the facility to accommodate trash and energy from waste ash from outside Brock Township.

In October 2006, the Ministry of the Environment requested that the Region of Durham prepare a remedial plan that would address an existing leachate problem at the Brock dump. This plan, which is to be delivered to the Ministry no later than January 31, 2007, also includes a \$10.5 million option that will expand the capacity of the dump in addition to outlining the remedial action that is required to prevent the leachate from contaminating surrounding soil and the Lake Simcoe watershed.

According to Clifford Curtis, the Commissioner of Works for the Region of Durham, the option to expand the vertical capacity of the dump is one of three options in the Region's response to MOE and is the option the Works Department is recommending.

"We are recommending to use the facility a little longer to recover some capital costs out of it," Mr. Curtis said.

The two other options considered were to: a) improve operating practices and implement engineered controls while continuing to operate the facility at the status quo; and b) estab-

lish only a limited leachate collection system using landfill mining, followed by landfill closure.

Mr. Curtis said the costs to close the facility would be similar to the costs of expanding it. "It would still cost \$10.5 million to close it," he said adding that once the work to expand the facility is completed "we would look at this as an alternative to Michigan if the border were to close." He also said the Brock facility could provide additional capacity in the event the Region's proposed Energy From Waste (EFW) plant does not open by 2010, the year the waste contract with Michigan expires.

Currently the Brock dump accepts between 5,000 and 6,000 tonnes of waste every year and according to Mr. Curtis, the vertical expansion is required as part of the remediation plan and would require 100,000 tonnes of material to contour and shape the landfill before a "roofing" system could be put in place to prevent rainwater and moisture from seeping through the garbage. Mr. Curtis stressed that the footprint of the facility would not increase dramatically because the expansion would be vertical allowing a height elevation of 272 metres maximum—a height that would allow for 750,000 tonnes of additional garbage. He does however, admit that the Region will need to acquire leachate-affected lands north of the site to be used as a buffer zone, by either purchase or

expropriation.

According to Heather Gillies, a spokesperson for the Brock and Georgina Against Garbage (BAG) advocacy group, residents in the area will not accept this new plan and will petition Brock council to pass restrictive by-laws and submit objections to the Ministry of the Environment to demand an Environmental Assessment prior to any work being initiated. "It is clear that Durham cannot be trusted," Ms. Gillies said. "They are finding every loop hole they can without regard for the residents, the environment or even common sense. If they can grandfather it in, slip it through, they will. They will all be long gone on pension by the time the worst of the damage ensues."

According to Ms. Gillies, garbage truck traffic would increase 17 fold and Durham is looking for Brock to cover or share much of the cost of road improvements.

BAG is meeting very shortly to discuss strategy and Ms. Gillies says "a mountain of garbage is not in any way in our vocabulary, agenda nor in any way acceptable. This will not be a 'Town Hall Meeting' but rather an action meeting to close the dump once and for all."

The recommended expansion-remediation option is not a fait accompli since the process requires a number of approvals from Regional council, MOE and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.



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