

# THE HALTON COMPASS

REGIONAL NEWS, NOTES AND NEIGHBOURS

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## Hands off our landfill

**Savoline wants GTA to look elsewhere  
Both Liberals and Tories opposed to landfill grab**

BY BERNADETTE WARD

Like a mother bear watching over her young, Halton politicians are keeping a wary eye on its state-of-the-art landfill site since it has appeared on a trash contingency list for Toronto and GTA municipalities.

Regional council voted unanimously on October 5 to send a strongly worded message to the province that the region's site is not open for business.

"The made in Halton solution was to be for the residents of Halton," said Keith Bird, Regional and Town Councillor, Oakville Ward 3.

Such sentiments were echoed across the chamber, with many of the words used to describe the possibility of being used as a solution to other regions problems as "immoral", "shameful" and "disgusting."

"There has to be an undertaking on the part of the province, a change of thought on how we proceed on this issue," said Regional Chair Joyce Savoline.

Between U.S. legislation banning Canadian garbage and a document commissioned by York, Durham and Peel regions and produced by Gärtner Lee, there has been no end to the trash talk across this region and others.

It's a "hands-off our landfill" kind of chatter with little sympathy engendered for Toronto and other municipalities since they have had 20 years to plan for this eventuality.

"I believe each region should look after its own garbage and I feel that the Region should say no to other region's garbage as it is not our responsibility," said Halton MP Gary Carr.

Liberal candidate for Halton-Wellington, Erin Mayor Rod Finnie said that Toronto like every other community "has to be responsible in dealing with the challenges it faces. If you run out of water; if you run out of garbage capacity then maybe you shouldn't be growing."

Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh has also gone on record opposing both taking on anyone else's garbage or being on a contingency list.

"Simply said, no, we will not take Toronto's garbage under any circumstances," said Chudleigh. Regional council agrees. They are also emphatic that the province needs to take a leadership role in waste management. They are already the authoritative body that determines the standards.

"They have a responsibility to work with municipalities to develop good, responsible

options for dealing with waste," said Savoline. This is not precisely the perspective of the provincial government.

"Both the Premier and the Minister of the Environment have been clear on the government's position which is that managing waste is a municipal responsibility," said Ministry of the Environment spokesperson Ann O'Hagan. She adds that although the province is looking to municipalities to develop plans, they will support those plans in various ways.

For starters, Laurel Broten, the current Minister of the Environment has expressed interest in pursuing changes plans to the Environmental Assessment Act.

"It's not acceptable that it takes so long to site a landfill," said O'Hagan. "It's too arduous and needs to be looked at."

Savoline remembers with clarity the process that cost between eight to ten million dollars and took the better part of ten years. Part way through the process when Halton ran out of landfill capacity, the region approached those municipalities that had capacity

"Everyone turned us down. The only option after much analysis was to ship our garbage to Buffalo," said Savoline.

The taxpayers ended up footing a bill to ship their trash that cost \$168 per tonne versus \$10 it would have cost to have shipped it to a more local landfill. In the end it cost the taxpayers to about \$60 million according to Savoline's recollection. Since then, Halton has pursued a course of action that works towards ensuring the landfill's capacity continues for as long as possible.

Taking trash from other municipalities would not only be unfair to residents who have worked hard to make waste management programs work, it would only be a stopgap measure for those municipalities at best.

Halton's landfill has 2.8 million tonnes of capacity left. It will serve the region anywhere from the next 17 years up to a possible 30 or 40 when the organics program kicks in. Taking the GTA's waste of 1 million tonnes per year - and that's residential only, not industrial and commercial, Halton's landfill would reach capacity in three years.

Even if the region was willing, which they are not, it would take at least 15 months lead-time to build capacity.

"We don't have cells sitting around waiting for garbage," points out Savoline. "We build them as they are needed."



And the winner is...

PHOTO BY STEPHEN BAKER

Looking radiant is the reigning Miss Canada Scholarship, Megan Punnett. Oakville resident Megan was on hand in Milton on Sunday night to crown Miss Halton and Miss Teen Halton at the pageant held at Hot Rods. Judges were Halton Chair Joyce Savoline, Milton Mayor Gord Krantz and Kirsten Pitkanen of Canadian Academy of Vocal Arts. Megan is currently studying Kinesiology at the University of Western Ontario. Story and photos page 14.

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