

Working together for cleaner air

As the weather becomes warmer and we begin to enjoy the outdoors, poor outdoor air quality becomes more of an issue.

Air pollution kills roughly 1,800 people prematurely in Ontario every year. Smog irritates the eyes, nose and throat, reduces lung capacity, and aggravates respiratory diseases such as asthma and bronchitis. Smog is especially harmful to children and seniors. To help us on our way to clean air, the public sector is working to improve air quality.

The Halton Partners for Clean Air is a group of 12 public sector organizations which include the four area municipalities, both school boards, the Hydro Commissions, Conservation Halton and Halton Region.

The partners are looking at joint actions that will help address the concerns regarding the health and environmental impact of smog.

THE REGION REPORT



Joyce Savoline

Air quality in Ontario is monitored by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). When the air quality is poor, the MOE issues a Smog Alert.

On Thursday, May 3 we had our first Smog Alert in Halton. The Health Department recommends that you avoid vigorous physical activity outside during a Smog Alert, especially children, seniors, and people with respiratory problems.

Smog is a form of poor air quality affecting urban and suburban areas. It is produced when air pollutants react with heat

and sunlight. Pollutants come from the burning of fossil fuels such as oil, gasoline, coal, and diesel which are used in furnaces, vehicles, trucks, industry, and power plants.

Fine dust and ash blown up from roads, construction sites and agricultural areas are also pollutants that contribute to smog.

As individuals, we can help reduce poor air quality during on a Smog Alert by carpooling and grouping errands, turning the engine off while we are parked or waiting, and avoiding the use of pesticides and gas-powered lawn equipment.

Individually the difference may be small. Together the impact is huge.

For more information about air quality in Halton, please visit www.region.halton.on.ca/health.

—Joyce Savoline is the chair of Halton Region

'Dust bowl' brought to council's attention

Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis made a plea for the "forgotten residents" of Dublin Line, north of Hwy. 7 in Acton at last week's general committee meeting.

Lewis told his colleagues around the council table that he has received phone calls and e-mails about the dust being generated by the dry road conditions. A 110-name residents' petition was also submitted to the town.

"I talked to some residents, and quite frankly they feel forgotten," said Lewis. "Dublin Line above Hwy. 7, for want of a better terminology, is a dust bowl. I saw it for myself, and as cars went by, it's virtually impossible to live outside the house at all."

"I'm pleading on behalf of the residents to get up there ASAP (as soon as possible)," he asked town engineer Bob Austin.

Traditionally the town does not begin its calcium program (to control road dust) until mid to late May hoping that one application will suffice for the year, said Austin.

Water trucks have been out, said Austin, and were expected to be out again. Everyone is hoping for some wet weather, he added.

"We are very conscious of the dust. We have had many people remind us of it," said Austin.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

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