

# Halton not top culprit for hazardous waste: Region

Town planner says report incorrect

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

The City of Burlington has been taking it on the chin recently due to media reports citing it as a heavy-hitter in the generating and receiving of toxic waste.

The news articles were drawn from a study released by the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP), which fingered Burlington as the third largest generator and fifth largest receiver of the hazardous stuff in the province.

But Burlington's bad rap is actually the result of a misunderstanding in terms, and its black eye should be shared with some other guy.

The study, called Open for Toxics: A Study of Hazardous Waste Generation Disposal in Ontario, did place Burlington in the top five of toxic-sources in the province.

But it was referring to the District of Burlington, as defined by the Ministry of Environment.

That covers all of Halton and

Peel, including Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon, as well as Oakville, Milton, Halton Hills and, yes, the city of Burlington.

The misunderstanding, said Halton chair Joyce Savoline, has put an unwarranted fear into local residents.

"It has alarmed some citizens that hazardous waste is being handled in this community that they didn't know about," she said.

The top toxic culprits aren't located in this region at all, assured Halton's Planning Director Pat Murphy.

"The prime generators of hazardous waste are not in Halton at all. They're outside our boundaries," he said. "And our treatment facilities in Halton are more than capable and meet all ministry standards."

Halton receives no hazardous waste other than that collected from its Household Hazardous Waste depot, added Mr. Murphy.

A rebuttal report drawn up by Mr. Murphy fingered Mississauga's Safety-Kleen Ltd. as a prime source of hazardous waste in the Burlington district.

The CIELAP study — the first of its kind in a decade — found that toxic waste imported into Ontario jumped by 138 per cent between 1994 and 1998.

And waste generated within Ontario leaped 42 per cent in the same time frame.

The study was based on transported quantities of hazardous waste or liquid industrial waste only, which are monitored by the province.

Leachate waste — the stuff which leaks from landfill sites — is considered by the study as a generator of the toxic stuff.

But under Ministry guidelines, the leachate from Halton's landfill is considered non-hazardous waste.

Mayor Gord Krantz wondered how valid the findings were given the interest of its authors.

"How concerned are you about special interest groups like that," he asked Mr. Murphy, who opted to keep the door open on the findings.

"It certainly doesn't mean we can ignore their issues," said Mr. Murphy. "They do bring up good issues from time to time."

To which Mr. Krantz responded "The important phrase is from time to time."

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