

# Halton officials don't want Toronto's trash in Milton

By **JASON MISNER**  
*The Champion*

Given that the Ministry of Environment (MOE) has the power to allow a municipality to dump its garbage into another municipality's landfill, politicians from Halton are urging neighbouring Toronto to cure its waste woes as soon as possible.

"The ministry has emergency powers but those are for exactly what you stated, emergencies, and they are quite short term," said MOE spokesperson John Steele.

That possibility has some feeling a little uneasy.

Toronto ships its garbage to a landfill site in Michigan. The issue of what Toronto would do with its garbage if the border closes — exposing its vulnerability — was highlighted last week when Michigan refused to take the Big Smoke's trash.

The United States border was closed for almost 19 hours, starting at 4 p.m. last Tuesday, stranding more than 70 semi-trailer trucks filled with compacted Toronto garbage.

The border closure order came on the heels of a U.S. government ban on Canadian beef products after a cow in Alberta tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Also playing a part was heightened U.S. security measures.

Toronto can store trash at its seven transfer stations but that would last only a day or a day-and-a-half.

That limited space factor in storing garbage has Halton Regional Chair Joyce Savoline calling on Toronto to come up with a more suitable plan to haul and store the huge amounts garbage it produces daily.

"When I heard the border was closed, I thought, 'What are they going to do with all of their garbage?'" she said. "They don't have a lot of time to put a plan together. It's a little disconcerting no concrete plans are in place to deal with garbage when the borders close for a period of time."

"Bringing it here is totally unacceptable. We don't have the room to help."

She said a primary reason is Halton's only landfill site, located on Regional Road 25 in Milton, has capacity for a total of three tons of garbage. Toronto alone produces one million tons a year, and allowing some of that trash into the Region's landfill site would create a whole set of new problems for residents here, Ms Savoline said.

She noted the Region is working very hard in diverting more of its waste with the aim of prolonging the 30-year life of its only landfill site.

Both Ms Savoline and Milton

Mayor Gord Krantz said they would fight hard to prevent Toronto garbage from coming to Halton due to a border shut down.

"A provincial order is a provincial order, but we would vigorously object to it," Ms Savoline said.

Halton found itself in a similar position about 20 years ago, Ms Savoline said, when garbage was being shipped to Buffalo for a few years while the Region worked to find a new landfill site.

Ms Savoline said Toronto was asked if Halton's garbage could be sent there in the interim and they said no, and she said everyone understood and accepted that decision. "Nobody criticized their position," she said.

What it did was cause Halton to undertake the long and expensive task of going through the process necessary to establish a landfill site.

Toronto has no choice but to do the same thing, Ms Savoline said.

Mr. Steele said the Province has been meeting with Toronto officials since the border closure issue arose to help come up with a viable solution to deal with garbage.

"We are having discussions with the City of Toronto over what could be done in the future if this should occur again," he said.

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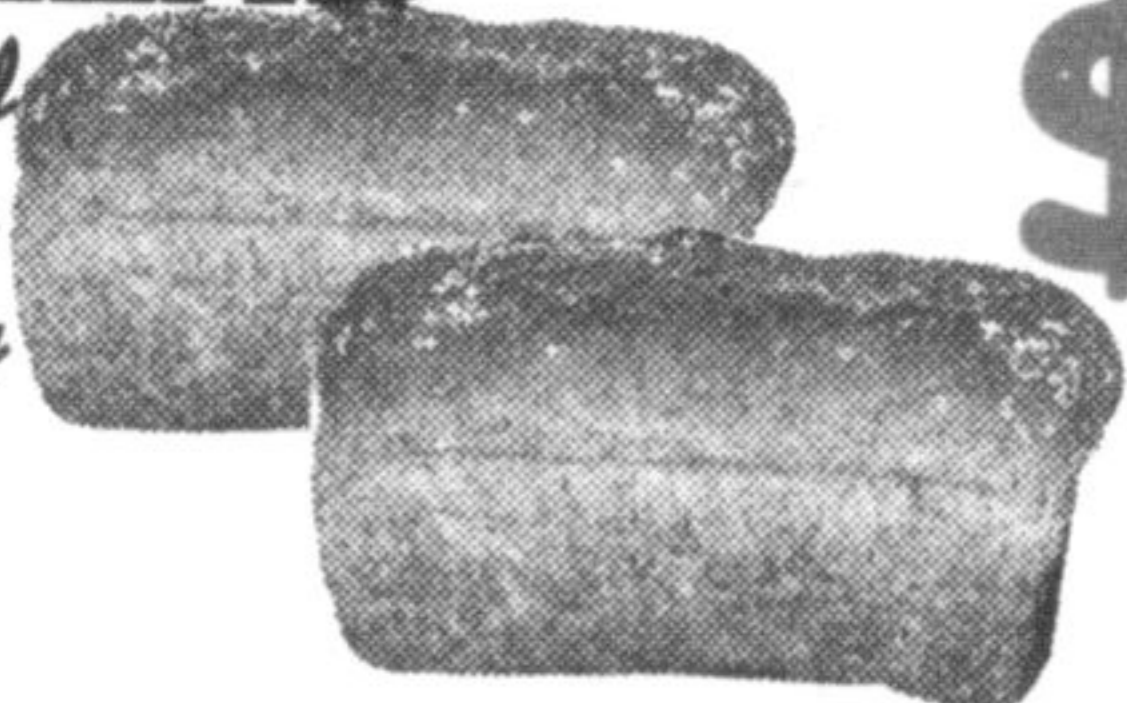
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