

June 14, 2007

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Lake George Cawood Association**

The purpose of this presentation is to share concerns of members of the Association, all of whom are property owners on or near Lake George, which is in the Municipality of Alleyn and Cawood, approximately 15 km south of the proposed Engineered Landfill. There are approximately 30 members of the Association and nearly 50 different property owners on Lake George, most of whom are seasonal residents. Our members include those who actively oppose the project and those who are keen to see it go forward.

The first point we wish to make is that we are very much aware and concerned that the present system of receiving waste and garbage in pen holes in the ground is neither sustainable nor desirable. It needs to be changed and the sooner, the better. We support the objectives of the Quebec law that requires that communities throughout Quebec and in the Outaouais find better ways to reduce, recycle and reuse their current waste.

However, even with these provisions, there will be a substantial need for means to deal with the remaining waste. These mechanisms must be environmentally sound and socially acceptable and must certainly be within the reach of the financial capabilities of municipalities – and the taxpayers.

Our comments are in three parts relating to a) the engineered landfill site, b) the external implications and c) alternatives to engineered landfill and suggest some criteria we would like the government to use in reaching a conclusion about the project.

**a) The proposed engineered landfill project**

The active life of the engineered landfill is some 25 to 30 years, but the consequences of what takes place during that period of time may live with the residents of the community forever. **Therefore, if the landfill is approved, the engineered landfill must meet all the standards of the government and no shortcuts, derogations or special exceptions should be permitted.** This is all the more important given that the proposed site is surrounded by tourism projects and property owners for whom a natural and healthy ecosystem is very important. The livelihoods of many residents depend on tourism and related industries. It is essential there be no risk of leaching of contaminants into the groundwater – now or in the future.

The project is designed to serve the communities of the Outaouais and perhaps other parts of Quebec. It is neither feasible, nor designed to accommodate waste that comes from much larger communities and in particular from Ontario. **If the project is approved, it must be absolutely clear that the import of waste from outside the province is specifically excluded for the life of the project.** [This commitment was made by the projects proponent, M Denis Rouleau during Phase 1 of the hearings and we understand this is forbidden by Quebec law.] We would prefer that the project be limited to the region, if that is possible.

Finally there is a tendency, once these types of projects are put in place, that they either be expanded, in terms of capacity or the lifetime of the project – or both. **Again, any approval of the project needs to be accompanied by clear direction that no/no expansion of capacity or extension of the life of the project will be allowed.**

We recognize that there are some benefits to the local community in the form of revenue, employment, support for the volunteer fire department and cleanup of the existing landfill. There are also potential drawbacks as the existence of the engineered landfill may minimize future investment in the tourism industry and hence revenue for the community and jobs.

#### **b) External Impacts**

There is a potential for significant, negative impacts for the community and surrounding areas. These relate to issues of smell, possible attraction of gulls that would affect neighbouring locales. Some of these impacts can be reduced to a minimum or eliminated. **It is essential that any approval of the project include provisions to reduce the risk to an absolute minimum.**

In addition, a number of concerns have been raised with respect to transportation systems and their capacity to handle the additional volume of truck traffic. Besides the obvious issue of repair, maintenance and upkeep of the roads, there are significant concerns regarding the safety of already busy roads, which experience an ever growing increase in traffic every year. **There should be no approval of the project if the government is not prepared to accept the additional financial implications of road maintenance and improvement that would be needed. There should be no approval of the project if the safety of existing users is put at risk due to the increase in truck traffic.**

#### **c) Alternatives**

There is perhaps the most important area of concern; for while we have no doubt that our existing means of handling waste and garbage need to be radically changed, it is far from clear how this engineered landfill would compare to other alternatives such as incineration and plasma gasification. Nor are we confident that the MRC plans to recycle and reuse will be successfully implemented. It is easy to fall back on the tried and true – landfill.

This is very important given the deadline of December 2008. Such deadlines spur needed action. They may also lead leaders to make decisions based on the best option available at the time, and omit from consideration a better alternative that might be available a short time later.

We understand from our consultations with environmental groups that their first priority is always to ensure that the options of reuse, recycle and reduce be exploited to the maximum before engineered landfills be used. While they are not keen on engineered landfills, they consider them to be more environmentally sound than incineration. We have no reason to disagree with that conclusion.

However, very recent developments suggest that new plasma gasification technology, now being piloted in Ottawa, may provide an environmentally sound method of eliminating waste using small to medium sized plants more appropriate to the needs

of the Outaouais region. These plants could reduce the need to transport waste over large distances and provide the possibility of producing electricity.

We are not in a position to assess the potential and viability of these technologies – we leave that to the experts.

**We would be very concerned, however, if the government were to approve the engineered landfill project now, only to discover that a better alternative would have been available if a delay of a year or so had been permitted.**

If this were to happen we could have the following scenario(s)

- The engineered landfill continued to function for 30 or more years even while a more environmentally sound alternative was available.
- Another alternative such as plasma gasification became available and competed with the landfill so that the financial viability of the landfill site came into question – and the company was not able to meet its financial and environmental obligations.
- The engineered landfill co-existed with other alternatives and operated effectively and within expected parameters – albeit at a lower capacity than envisaged.
- The lower capacity utilization, due to the existence of alternative waste disposal, caused the company to seek “new customers” from further and further away and from sources in either the USA or Ontario.

### **Conclusion**

The bottom line is that we want the best decision for the long term to manage our waste in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner. **We want the government, in assessing whether to proceed with this proposal, to consider all alternative options which meet this objective – and not be limited only to this specific proposal.**

**Finally, we want the government to consider what would be the alternatives if the project is not approved.** Where would the waste go then and how would communities of the Outaouais meet their obligations under the new law? What would be the environmental, road-related and economic impacts of these other options? How far would local communities need to truck their garbage? At what cost? To whom? On which roads?

These decisions are not easy and, in making this presentation, we wanted to identify a number of criteria for decision making and express the concerns of the members of the executive of the Association and the membership at large. It is clear that whatever the decisions, we do not want the existing practices in handling waste and garbage to continue any longer than absolutely necessary.