

December 12, 2011

To:

The Hon. Dalton McGuinty  
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

From:

The 17 member groups of the Ontario Zero Waste Coalition

Dear Premier:

We are writing to convey our growing frustration over government inaction on implementing policies and legislation to reduce waste generated in this Province, to expand extended producer responsibility programs and to generate jobs by creating opportunities for diversion, recycling and reuse.

It's been three years since *Toward A Zero Waste Future: Review of Ontario Waste Diversion Act, 2002* was introduced. We welcomed that review and participated in the consultation process. But three Ministers of the Environment, and one meeting with Ministry staff later, and we see no results of that consultation. Instead we read daily of new incinerator applications coming forward, most recently in Kingston and Meaford.

We believe it is shameful that the Province's diversion rate (as calculated in 2008) remains at 23% — far below the target of 60% established by the government and practically the same as it was a decade ago according to The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, Gord Miller's 2010/2011 Annual Report. The report also notes that the volume of waste generated annually continues to rise. He called upon your government to make waste diversion one of its top environmental priorities. So does the Association of Ontario Municipalities and so do we.

It is simply unacceptable that at a time when the over consumption of resources lays at the heart of all of the major problems facing this planet we are failing to act on reducing waste while at the same time promoting incineration — a process that destroys valuable resources forever while emitting greenhouse gases and a toxic stew of contaminants. What sense does this make?

If this government intends to promote incineration as a way to deal with waste then please state that clearly so voters will know where you stand and can make choices accordingly. Instead, this government seems to tacitly support it by not moving forward on promised Zero Waste policies, by allowing "demonstration" incineration projects to skip full EAs, by green-lighting a new incinerator in Durham despite identified health risks and over the vigorous objections of local citizens, by providing Plasco with \$4 million in no interest loans and by allowing Plasco to move ahead to full operation despite 25 records of non-compliance on emissions.

We believe this government has led the way on many green issues, including energy and we applaud you for this. But that is why the inaction on waste and the support for incineration is so puzzling to us.

As our organization continues to grow and as we make contact with new communities facing the threat of incineration you can expect increasing calls to put policies and legislation in place as suggested by AMO and our Coalition.

At a time when the Province's budget is very tight, surely you must be looking for actions you can take that will cost virtually nothing yet move the Province toward sustainability while earning the support of a broad cross-section of citizens and municipal governments. We believe implementing Zero Waste and promoting it as a job-generating, green initiative could be a real win for your government that would also earn the support of other parties.

Please take action on this issue.

Yours truly,  
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