

Feb. 7, 2003

David Ohashi, Region of Halton

Regional Chair and all members Of Council

Comments on Mid Halton Sewage Treatment Plant expansion plan:

We are residents of Ward 4 and have many concerns regarding both the plan itself, and the process followed by the Region to date.

The Process Followed by the Region:

1. How could it be that no one seemed to know anything about this expansion until Councillor Elgar took it upon himself to inform his constituents last November? We understand the Region had a public meeting June 24, 2002. The last week of June is traditionally one of the busiest of the year given graduations, holiday plans, etc. and this strikes us as **a very poor time** to try to engage the public.
2. We suspect one reason people did not know about the expansion plan, is because this issue was billed by the Region as the “Water and WasteWater Master Plan Review”. Who would guess that this really meant the sewage plant in their neighbourhood was going to expand? Official notices that appear in the paper using technical language is not an acceptable method of informing the public. We recommend this practice be reviewed immediately. Since Councillor Elgar was successful in informing the public (as evidenced by the attendance at both meetings he organized), perhaps he could be called upon to help the Region in this regard.
3. We understand that residents did not receive answers to their questions that were asked back in November and we now understand that the Region plans to respond to the questions at some later date, by way of a public document to be released in March or April. Since the period for public comment ends Feb. 7, residents will not be able to respond to the Region’s answers within the period allowed for public comment. Residents deserve answers to their questions before any decisions are made.

The period for public comment must be extended.

Regarding The Expansion Plan:

- 1. We are opposed to the expansion of the Mid Halton facility and increasing its sewage processing capacity.** Thousands of residents live nearby and we do not believe it is good planning to expose them to the majority of risks associated with this plan. **We are opposed to piping Milton's sewage to Oakville for processing here.** It makes more sense to process sewage close to the source. In November, Pat Murphy, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works told residents this could not be done because of the strict restrictions on dumping wastewater into Sixteen Mile Creek. We've recently learned that technology exists for Milton to process its own sewage without dumping into the creek. We recommend that this technology be looked at in greater detail as it provides a viable solution to the problem. We ask that the Region take a look at the recent strides made by Zenon Environmental, located right here in Oakville.
- 2. The medieval practice of dumping wastewater and other pollutants into Lake Ontario, the source of drinking water for millions of people, must be stopped. Technology exists to avoid this practice. Why aren't we using it?**
- 3. We are opposed to our tax dollars being used to finance any part of this expansion. We have been told for years that growth is necessary to keep taxes down, yet here is an example of how tax payers are being asked to cover the cost of urban sprawl in our area, through increased taxes.**
4. We understand that odour was not considered with the original criteria for expansion. This is unacceptable. Odour studies must be conducted and measures to eradicate odour must be budgeted for now.

In summary, we believe that this expansion plan is proceeding ahead for all the wrong reasons.

STOP the process until residents are satisfied with the options before council, and all their questions have been answered to their satisfaction. Given the crowds at these meetings, and the letters written by residents, the public's perception of the plan is flawed to the point that the only responsible option would be to stop and take a sober second look. **To continue ahead now, given the public outcry, would raise some very serious questions as to the motives of the Region of Halton.**

We request that the questions raised in this correspondence be answered immediately, not lumped in together and generically addressed at some later date.

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