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Durham region's planned garbage incinerator has three things going for it: the region's medical officer of health has given it a green light; it meets provincial environmental regulations; and modern incinerators of this type, which turn waste into energy, are safely used across Europe and, closer to home, in Peel region.

But none of that has placated opponents of Durham's plan to burn its garbage in a waste-to-energy facility in Clarington instead of trucking it to a landfill in another country.

As reported by the *Star's* Catherine Porter, there are still concerns in Durham about incineration even though final provincial approval is expected shortly.

The critics of incineration argue that the better option is to produce less waste and reuse and recycle more. They are right. Realistically, however, for the foreseeable future, if not forever, we will still need some place to put what we don't reuse or recycle.

If not an incinerator then what? A landfill? No one wants one of those in their backyard, either. Indeed, there is even significant opposition to recycling and composting facilities.

A right-sized incinerator – as the one proposed for Clarington appears to be – will not compete with recycling. Indeed, Germany has long incinerated and does a far better job of reducing waste and recycling than we do. And Durham is continuing with its ambitious plans to drive up its diversion rate through increased recycling.

A well-run, modern incinerator also meets all of our health, environmental and safety standards. To appease critics, the region went a step further and promised the facility would meet even more stringent European emission standards.

Whether a municipality decides to dig a landfill (or buy one in someone else's backyard, as Toronto did) or build an incinerator, there will always be critics. But by pledging to boost recycling and dispose of what remains within its own borders, Durham Region is taking the responsible route.