HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

ENVI • NUMBER 039 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, November 24, 2014

Chair

Mr. Harold Albrecht

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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● (1530)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC)): This is meeting number 39 of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. We're continuing our study today on the management of municipal solid waste and industrial materials. We have two witnesses with us today, Mr. Dale Harley, general manager of Orgaworld, Ottawa, and from the Region of Peel, Larry Conrad, manager of waste operations.

We normally begin with a 10-minute opening statement followed by questions from our committee members, so we'll go with both opening statements first and then proceed with the questions.

We'll begin with Mr. Dale Harley, please.

Mr. Dale Harley (General Manager, Ottawa, Orgaworld Canada): Let me start off by saying thank you for the opportunity to come and address the standing committee. My name is Dale Harley and I am the general manager of Orgaworld Canada—not just Ottawa but the whole shooting match we have here.

We're a Netherlands-based company that uses innovative technologies to process organic waste into high-quality compost that is sold to the agricultural community to help rehabilitate soil and replace the need for chemical fertilizers. We are truly closing the loop when it comes to waste management.

Orgaworld currently operates two plants in Ontario, one in London and one in Ottawa, that are permitted to process up to 300,000 tonnes of source-separated organics per year. We are Ontario's single largest processor of SSO. We are in the process of expanding across Canada and we hope to have two new plants operating, in B.C. and Alberta, in the near future.

According to the 2013 report by the Conference Board of Canada, Canada ranked lowest internationally of 17 OECD countries for our record on waste management. Nationally the total amount of residential and non-residential non-hazardous waste sent for disposal in 2010 was a whopping 25 million tonnes.

For the purpose of this presentation, I'd like to focus on the management of organics as opposed to talking about all waste streams.

According to a 2006 Natural Resources Canada report, there were 6.7 million tonnes of organic waste produced in Canada, second only to paper. That was back in 2006. Since that time, it's my understanding, organics now represent the largest single stream of waste coming into the waste stream system.

Across Canada there are significant variances among provinces as to how they deal with this organic waste. Ontario and Quebec have general non-mandatory goals for diverting materials from landfills, with a net goal of approximately 60% diversion. One of the primary mechanisms used to achieve this has been the diversion of organics from the municipal sector. But the overall diversion goals have not been achieved, and the industrial, commercial and institutional sector continues to generate significant quantities of organics that are landfilled. Various municipalities, such as the City of Toronto, have gone above that 60% goal and self-imposed a target of 70% diversion.

Nova Scotia has had an organics ban for almost 20 years now and is really a leader in Canada in this area. Other maritime provinces are beginning to impose similar regulations, and British Columbia is now moving towards an organics ban as well. Manitoba and Saskatchewan have fledgling regulatory systems in place, while Alberta's promotion of organics diversion is driven by the specified gas emitters regulation, which seeks to reduce greenhouse emissions through a cap-and-trade system. In this respect, a number of organic diversion projects have been developed to create offset credits in the marketplace.

By comparison, the European Union has made significant progress in diverting organics from their landfills. In 1999 the EU adopted a landfill directive that called for a reduction of organics to 35% of their 1995 tonnes by either 2016 or 2020. In the U.K. they instituted a landfill tax that was to rise to $86 a tonne by 2011, and in fact that tax today stands at $144 per tonne. In Germany they introduced a disposal restriction of less than 3% organics.

What Canada needs is a national ban on organics going into landfills. This ban would not only be good for the environment but would also be good for the economy and the reduction of greenhouse gases.

One of the strongest points in favour of the zero-waste concept is the impact on job creation. According to a European Commission study, 400,000 jobs could be created in Europe if they implemented the current EU waste policies. The environment commissioner, Janez Potocnik, said:

> We need to see waste as a resource—and to bury that resource in the ground is worse than short-sighted. This report shows that waste management and recycling can make a big contribution to economic growth and job creation.

That report actually went on to find that four jobs could be created for every 10,000 tonnes per year of compost that was produced.

● (1535)

Looking at it from a greenhouse gas perspective, waste management is the fourth-largest contributor to greenhouse gases. ln terms of greenhouse gases, there are a number of benefits to organic diversion.

First of all, organics in landfills create methane, which is actually 25 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. While many landfills attempt to collect and destroy this methane gas before emission, it's not possible to collect it all. Generally, landfills successfully recover only about half of all the methane they produce. The end result is all of that entering our atmosphere.

Next, landfills are generally further away from municipal hubs than are localized organics processing facilities or handling facilities. Generally, the trucking and diesel fuel consumption associated with hauling to the landfill is greater than diverting to nearer organics facilities.

Also, organics that enter a landfill provide no nutrient value. Organics that are converted into compost, at least at Orgaworld, can be used to displace petroleum-based fertilizers, which is a significant greenhouse gas reduction strategy.

The U.S. EPA estimates that diverted food waste can actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 0.42 tonnes equivalent of carbon dioxide per imperial ton of food. For California alone, looking at their food waste bulk, the total potential emission reduction is nearly six million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year. Given that a typical vehicle emits 4.7 tonnes of CO_2 per year, the food waste processing in California could thus potentially reduce the equivalent of 1.28 million cars' worth of greenhouse gas emissions. We would expect the same here in Canada, given our equivalent population.

ln closing, I'd like to thank the standing committee for the opportunity to speak on this important topic. There is definitely an opportunity for the federal government to take a leadership role in waste management and the banning of organics from landfill sites. Such a ban would be good for the economy and for reducing greenhouse gases.

When appropriate, I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.

● (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Harley.

We move now to Mr. Conrad for a 10-minute opening statement, please.

Mr. Larry Conrad (Manager, Waste Operations, Region of Peel): I thank the committee for inviting me as well to address you today. It's certainly an honour.

I was told that I would have about seven minutes to talk. I've created about 30 minutes of PowerPoint slides, being a typical municipal employee, because that's what we do, right?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Larry Conrad: I will get through what I can in seven minutes.

I've chosen to tell you about some of the things we do that are newer in our region or stuff we've undertaken that is unique.

We are a large municipality and consequently have a rather large budget for our operations, but really, we don't do anything that's different from what a small municipality does. We collect waste, we recycle it, and we reuse it where we can. Finally, for what we can't do any of the above to, we dispose of it, in the past at an incinerator, an EFW plant, and currently at a landfill site. Our scale affords us the ability to do some things that smaller municipalities can't do, but in the end, we're charged with handling our waste in an environmentally responsible and economically prudent fashion.

To give you a bit of a background on the kind of waste we handle in the region, in 2013 we handled roughly 510,000 tonnes. This won't add up, so don't bother adding it up, but roughly 90,000 tonnes of that was organics. Those organics were made up of yard waste, leaves, and the organics, the SSO, that we collect from our municipal residents. About 100,000 tonnes of that was blue box material, while 50,000 of that was from our CRCs. We have a network of CRCs. About 60% of that 50,000 was recyclable material. Finally, we disposed of about 240,000 tonnes via landfill.

The Region of Peel has a population of about 1.3 million. We're the second-largest municipality in the GTA. We span 1,200 square kilometres. We have a series of six CRCs now. We have an energy-from-waste facility. We're planning a new energy-from-waste facility. We have a MRF, a materials recovery facility. We have a landfill-gas-to-power facility. We do all of this under a strategy. Our strategy is a world without waste. That's what our vision would be.

I realize that's somewhat difficult to get to, but we've adopted our hierarchy on the 4Rs. We've based that on a balanced approach among social, environmental, and financial considerations, but more important is getting a range of input from our stakeholders and reflecting what's best for our residents.

We've had a number of key accomplishments over the last years. We're moving to a three-container system and getting away from a weekly bag collection. That will allow us to increase the amount of organics by between 10,000 and 20,000 tonnes a year. We're looking at building a new MRF. We're going to build a new organics facility. Also, we're going to build a new EFW plant.

Our vision is a world without waste. Most of our waste, we can reuse—

The Chair: I think I see a couple of people looking around and wondering about the acronyms you're throwing around with impunity. I get most of them, but to be honest I've missed some.

Mr. Larry Conrad: I'm sorry. A MRF is a materials recovery facility.

An hon. member: I thought it was a cartoon character.

Mr. Larry Conrad: That's a Smurf.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I thought it was multi-use recreational facility.

Mr. Larry Conrad: The CRC is a community recycling centre.

What else did I miss? EFW, energy-from-waste facility.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Larry Conrad: You're welcome.

Our biggest undertaking currently is our PERC project.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Larry Conrad: Of course, we talk about this all the time, so we're used to it. It's called the Peel energy recovery centre. That is to replace an old incinerator. It's going to be built for the private sector to handle roughly 300,000 tonnes of garbage, and be owned by the Region of Peel. We'll be able to use our garbage as a resource, rather than burying it in a landfill. We have decided it's going to be a mass burn combustion unit. There are about 500 mass burn facilities around the world, so we're definitely not inventing anything new.

One of the best things I wanted to promote on that PERC, other than the environmental benefits of not landfilling and the energy production, is the number of jobs we're going to create: 300 construction jobs and upwards of 40 direct and 120 indirect jobs. In waste management, you'll always have waste. It's good for the environment, it's good for energy, but it's good to keep people employed.

We have three composting facilities. No acronyms there. We produce compost from our organic waste. Much like Orgaworld, we market it to a number of facilities. A couple of the cool and exciting things we're doing there is that we have gone in with almost every major producer of material collected from the curbside in Ontario, Orgaworld included, as well as the Ministry of the Environment in Ontario, Dr. Lambert Otten from the University of Guelph, and the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. What that's about is developing agricultural field trials to help us market material into the agricultural community. That's allowed us to open markets that weren't there before. As I said, this is all over southwestern and central Ontario. It's not just confined to the Region of Peel.

Before that, we also worked on using our compost in the Filtrexx line of products, which use compost as filter equivalents. When you spray down for roadside seeding, it's a filtration for erosion control, living walls, where they have a side of a cliff they're trying to revegetate. It was a very exciting thing, and that was in conjunction with the University of Guelph.

I could go on, but I think I'm close to the end of my presentation. I wanted to leave you with where we should go from here. Every one of you sitting around the table is an expert in the field of waste management. Unfortunately, not everyone agrees on what we need to do. More needs to be done to address the political and social issues surrounding waste management. Bringing together lots of successful projects takes a lot of committed citizens. A lot of people have input into a lot of alternate technologies. Talk about energy from waste siting, as in the Port Hope area, the last one sited in Ontario; the social and political inputs are very definitely almost as important as the engineering inputs.

As Dale suggested, we need to look more at organics. Organics can be used for a lot of things besides compost. You'll never get away from composting plants, but you can use composting in an anaerobic digester—AD, I would say, but I've already been there—and co-digest it with waste water sludges and use the fuel maybe not to generate electricity, but for transportation. We're going to use natural gas-fired vehicles for our collection in our new contract, getting away from the use of diesel.

As reported on November 21, a poll of 1,044 residents across the country support EFW. This is good news because I really believe that the future of waste management is in energy production. We all know about recycling MRFs, and that's good, but how do you get that next percentile? We're on our way to trying to get to a 90% diversion from landfill rate. We're at about 50% now without EFW, but a lot of that can be done by using our stuff as energy from waste.

● (1545)

Waste plastic is an issue that we hear about around the world. There are uses for waste plastics, but not all waste plastics can be reused. A lot of research needs to go there.

We need to look at more research, both non-partisan and company-specific. It's important. I talked about two research projects this afternoon. We need to do a bit more research on how to use waste.

Economics, of course, needs to be addressed. New and innovative solutions take time and money to develop, but they can replace many of the jobs lost in the manufacturing sector, and I think that's important. As a federal government we need to promote industry. One of the things about waste is that as long as you have people, there is going to be waste. That waste needs to be properly managed, and the waste can do valuable jobs. As I've said to many people who have wanted to listen to me, I've lived through about three recessions through my time at Peel. A lot of that is based on the fact that waste is a resource, and we always need to deal with waste appropriately.

With that, I thank you for the time. I hope I didn't go over my seven minutes.

● (1550)

The Chair: Thanks, Mr. Conrad.

It looks as though you've come up with a triple-E plan for solid waste—environment, energy, and employment—so I think we're on the right track there.

We're going to move to our first round of questions.

Mr. Carrie.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank both witnesses for being here today to discuss this really important issue.

One of the things I'd like to ask you about.... There is a lot of Nimbyism when you're talking about the different plants. In reality, most people at the table would agree that what you're talking about really is the future. We need to start going there more.

Your company composts organic materials, also plastic bags and diapers. Does this make the composting process odorous and smelly?

Mr. Dale Harley: I take it that's directed toward Orgaworld.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Sure.

Mr. Dale Harley: The answer to that is no. As I said, Orgaworld has two plants. One was our first plant in Canada, in London, Ontario. I'll admit that when we brought our technology and our operational processes into Canada, we did not take into consideration a number of things. One of those things was the expectation with respect to odour, and the second was the not-in-my-backyard mentality.

In the case of London we did have some problems; I admit that. We've invested millions of dollars. We have rectified the situation in London, and if anyone is familiar with the area now, the last time Orgaworld was in the news was about 18 months ago. It had to do with the fact that we had pleaded guilty on a charge of emitting an odour. Guess what? We did it; we paid our fine.

In the media reports the tone of the coverage was that, yes, this was a charge from back in 2010, and there are no problems at the plant anymore.

The second plant we opened up was in Ottawa, and we took our lessons learned—or the fact that we had the crap beat out of us—to heart. We did a much better job of reaching out to the community to explain what it was that we were going to be doing and how we were going to be doing it. I'm very pleased to say that in Ottawa our odour complaints in the last four years that we have been operating come to a grand total of zero.

I'll go back to our London experience. I'll admit there's still a small group of people, about five households, and it doesn't matter what I do, I will never convert them. I used to be a politician like you guys. I have the experience, I have the scars, and I just confess that they're not going to be turned over.

But in answer to your question, no.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Perfect.

I'm just curious. How do you minimize the odours?

Mr. Dale Harley: In London and in Ottawa we have a state-of-the-art odour abatement system that includes a wide variety of technologies. First of all, the whole process is managed inside an enclosed facility that is under negative air pressure. So if you were at one of our doors, you'd actually have to give it a little extra tug to get it open, because everything is being sucked in.

The odour is being sucked in through a series of biofilters, bio-scrubbers, and ammonia scrubbers that remove all of the noxious odours. The odour that is emitted is really a rest odour that comes off of our biofilters, which is like a wet hardwood. Some people describe it as a walk in the woods after a rain. Other people think it smells like potato water. It's very light, very fleeting. Of course, then it goes up through a 40-metre stack and is dispersed.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Excellent.

You mentioned too that it's the fourth-largest emitter of green-house gases. What are the biggest challenges the municipalities face, and the provinces and territories, in improving the situation we have here in Canada? You mentioned that overall we're not doing very good.

Maybe I'll throw this out to both of you. What are the biggest challenges facing our provinces, territories, and municipalities on improving?

● (1555)

Mr. Dale Harley: Larry, do you want to go first?

Mr. Larry Conrad: Sure, I can go first.

I think the biggest problem facing us as a municipality is not NIMBY but the "don't build anything, any time, anywhere" syndrome. That has replaced NIMBY. That's why I think it's very important to bring in the social and political action ahead of time.

At the Region of Peel, we do a pretty good job of bringing parties in. We've had an incinerator around for a long time, and it's almost forgotten about. But it's the interaction with the public; you have to deal with them effectively ahead of time. It's a very long and involved process. Some of these projects take three, four, five years of lead time before you even get to letting a contract to get it done.

I think the key answer is that the science is there. Don't try to sell people on the science. Sell people on the political side, the social side of it. No one wants to live next to a stinky place, for sure, but then a lot of people don't even want to live next to a school, either, because of the noise from the kids. It's a long process.

Mr. Dale Harley: We all have to educate our kids. We all have to dispose of our waste. We all have to take responsibility for it.

Reflecting on Larry's comments, the whole social marketing and social responsibility aspect is I think critical. There are two places where you need to do this outreach with the community. One is prior to the siting of a facility, and that is to make sure that you are cognizant and aware of all the issues or potential issues or concerns that people have. Then you have to share with them the science part, to be able to produce the evidence that shows that what people's expectations are....

People always go to the worst case scenario. Unless you tell them what is actually happening, you're not going to be able to convince them that it's not really all that bad. So fill the void in information by being proactive to get the good news story out.

The second part of that outreach happens once the facility is up and running to give people the opportunity to come and judge for themselves, come and see—or smell, in our case—what it is. I originally had started doing work in Ottawa, and about two or two and a half years ago they asked me to help out in London. The first thing I did when I got down there was to start bringing the media, the public, the politicians, through the plant to see for themselves what it was. Do you know what we discovered? They didn't detect anything. They were surprised. They were impressed. As a result of that, it gave them some confidence in standing up to the political pressure they were getting from a small group of people.

Outreach is important.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll move to Mr. Bevington, please, for seven minutes.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our presenters. As a former municipal official having to deal with waste disposal, I know exactly the problems that can come into it. I did it in a more isolated location, with less opportunity, but I also spent a fair bit of time looking at solutions.

Years back, I particularly admired a city called Borlänge in Sweden. I don't know if you're familiar with it. There they bought garbage from all different municipalities, collated it in a central location, sorted it, bundled it, and saved it for the winter for their heating purposes. It was very super organized in a very effective way. This was 20 years ago.

You know, I'm troubled too by how Canada has taken a turn away from energy from waste and is only now really coming back to it. There was a lot more opposition to it at one point in time.

We've heard some of that opposition here in front of the committee. We had a presenter saying that basically, when you burn waste for energy, many harmful particulates are released into the atmosphere. Do you agree with that position, or are you confident that the work you do with waste is providing a very clean stream of emissions?

● (1600)

Mr. Larry Conrad: To answer your question, I can do it in two ways. One is that I think the science has come a long way in the last 20 years, and that's important. But more importantly, waste itself is a relatively clean product as we collect it off the street. I'm not talking about the industrial waste from very exotic metals manufacturing processes and stuff like that, but I do know from when we were trying to do a little small project with a cement company in Mississauga, and I did a lot of background work on emissions, that waste, properly prepared and treated, can be as clean or cleaner than coal. As you go through the science, it comes back to convincing the people, bringing the people into the process early, and teaching them what you know. You're never going to win over 100% of the people, but when you look at it it's quite an accomplishment.

Our incinerator, our EFW plant, energy-from-waste plant, in Brampton, was 20 years-plus in operation and never really had any major issues. There were some minor things like the more compact fluorescent light bulbs they get out there, the more chances of getting mercury into the airstream. It's a very volatile heavy metal. It will evaporate in the high heat fairly easily, but you can treat that.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Do you have sensors in the smokestack? This is what they did in Borlänge. They had sensors in the smokestack, and they could identify when somebody put the wrong material into their garbage. They actually collected the garbage with computerized vehicles and would be able to trace the garbage stream back to the originators of it. We're talking about hundreds of thousands of tonnes of garbage they were moving, but these people were so well organized. Do you anticipate that this is a way that Canadian garbage should go, in this very organized fashion that will actually allow processors like yourself to be able to determine where any delinquent garbage comes from?

Mr. Larry Conrad: Once you take into account the sort of reuse-reduction aspect, there will always be material left over. In the waste strain, that material is, I really think, the future of waste management in energy production. I can't say that we would be able to trace that waste back to individual generators, but yes, most modern facilities —in fact, all that I've ever seen—have devices in the stacks that monitor the plume. They monitor what's going on in the burning chamber, so people are alerted right away as to when there's an issue in the process. I think it can be done safely. Around the world it's being done safely, and we've certainly done it safely in Peel.

Mr. Dale Harley: If I might just add, when we talk about energy from waste, not all of it involves incineration. Anaerobic digestion, for example, which my firm also does, is a good example of that. That being said, while in our experience incineration is a fairly expensive solution, it still has a place in dealing with the residual products that are produced through composting. For example, there are plastic bags—I heard Larry talk a little bit about that—with a cement kiln. We've actually run tests with several cement facilities as well and the material being used or burned is actually a cleaner source of energy than others.

The other thing is that we also use what we call 20-plus material out of our Ottawa plant to help fire kilns.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: I wanted to ask a couple of questions about funding for developing good waste streams. I don't know if you in Peel have used the FCM green municipal fund for any of the work that you did over the years, or if you used the gas tax money when it was strictly for green projects. Have you taken advantage of any of those streams? Do you see that there's any kind of fund available today that would encourage municipalities to put more effort and money into waste management?

● (1605)

Mr. Larry Conrad: Yes, sure, I've actually applied for two GMF funds. One was an earlier fund around mixing waste with sewage sludge. But currently we're doing an agricultural research study with all the municipal producers in Ontario. We have all the major source-separated organics producers producing compost in that, and that is now in its first year of funding. We have used the GMF funds as well for some of our public education programs in the past, so it is a very important source of funding for municipal projects.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: And the gas tax, is there no question on it?

Mr. Larry Conrad: I can't answer on the gas tax. I'm sorry. As for our own waste management, we don't use that.

The Chair: We'll go to Mrs. Ambler.

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both of you, Dale and Larry, for being here. I thought your presentations were absolutely fascinating. I'm delighted that you're here, Larry, from the Region of Peel. I knew you would be able to tell us about some of the great things that are being done in Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon, so I'm very happy you were able to make it here.

I'd like to get into the weeds a little bit if that's okay with you, weeds, leaves, or whatever, and talk about those. I'd like you to tell us a bit more about the composting facilities. I know I was very impressed to hear about them, how they work, and to see one of them in action.

Specifically I'd like it if you could tell us about the different rules and criteria for what can go in a green bin and how your facilities are different that way. Mr. Carrie talked about plastic bags and diapers. In Peel region those are not allowed in our compost bins. I'm assuming the reason is that when you're creating soil to sell back to consumers, it wouldn't work with plastic bags and diapers and other things like that.

Also, in municipalities or regions where they do accept things like diapers and plastic bags in their green bins, my understanding is that they are not actually composted. What happens is they form the top layer of a landfill somewhere. I guess it's sort of like a lesser evil. Maybe you could tell me if that's true. That's just something I've heard. There are so many misconceptions about composting and how we look after organics. I'm hoping you can talk about that.

Mr. Larry Conrad: Sure.

In Peel we don't accept material that's in a plastic bag, although we do accept material that's in a biodegradable bag. That could be a biodegradable plastic or it could be a biodegradable fibre. A lot of people just wrap their stuff in newspapers.

That being said, we do get out in the community and promote that and explain it. We give examples, and we've actually submitted samples to residents for them to look at. We do that so we can produce a cleaner compost. Getting plastics out of a product that you're sending to Grandma and Grandpa's yard can be very difficult. That's where the bulk of our compost has been going—soils in the household, in the backyard garden. We don't accept diapers. We don't accept kitty litter. We don't accept pet waste or feminine hygiene products. Some of that we don't do just as a perception thing. When we're selling material, it's not very socially acceptable to say our compost was made using human waste. That being said, there's nothing wrong with it; it's just a marketing thing.

When you compare our system to the systems in the cities of Toronto, York and some others, in which they do co-collect those materials, they're using a different process. They are using the anaerobic digestion process. They are basically collecting the material and separating it off, so they can clean off the plastics. Dale can talk to this, because I know Orgaworld worked with a concrete company to take some of the plastics from their processing and use them as a fuel, but those plastics get sourced off and they just get sent to the landfill because there's really nothing else you can do with them.

In Peel, we have a two-stage system. We have two compost plants that are the first line, to which our materials go. One technology was made in Holland, and one technology was made in Germany. They're both box systems. We mix equal parts of yard waste and organic waste. That material goes into those boxes for seven days; it comes out, and then we send it to our second-line composting plant, which is actually on an old landfill site, the Chinguacousy landfill site. There we use a Gore windrow technology. The Gore cover helps to protect the compost from the environment, and the composting goes on underneath in the environment. That is our curing facility. It stays there six to eight weeks, and then we're able to screen that and produce a good product.

We produce a product that is intended to be sold as a soil amendment. You know, Grandma and Grandpa like to use a clean product. There are different classes of compost, depending on what you want to use it for, and we sell an agricultural grade as well, which is an inch and a half minus and a much rougher material. It has some of the ping-pong balls and dog toys in it and we sell that to the farmers. The farmers are okay with that. Not a lot of it is there, but it's just a different classification.

● (1610)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you. My children learned to ski on that hill in Chinguacousy Park.

Dale, I'd like to ask you about landfills. You mentioned methane gas. I didn't realize that it was worse than other toxins when organics are in landfills. I've heard people say, “Well, you know, if I put food waste in the garbage, it'll just compose in the landfill”, so they don't see the importance of separating it out. Maybe you could tell us a bit about that.

Mr. Dale Harley: I'm not an expert on methane gas in landfills, but I do want to go back to landfills, because you had made a comment about some people producing a compost that is not of a certain quality, so it ends up being a landfill cover. I'd like to start off by saying that the compost that Orgaworld produces is AA compost. It is not used for landfill cover, and 100% of it is sold back to the agricultural community. We actually have people on waiting lists trying to get more. They want us to produce more compost. They want it that badly because it's such a good product.

I'd like to stress that plastic being added does not have an impact on the quality of the compost, because our process ensures that it is removed. It does not end up being part of the product. For example, the Ministry of the Environment actually introduced some new guidelines about what your contaminants are allowed to be, and they're going down to 1%. So you have very little or none in there.

The one advantage about plastics and receiving plastics is that they increase the ease and reduce the "yuck" factor. We find that, for example, in York and in London, two communities that have the highest number of homes participating and the highest amount of material put into their green bin program. Remember, our objective should be diversion from landfill sites, so anything you can do to make it easier to get people to participate in a program is a positive thing.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: That's good to know. Thank you.

The Chair: We'll come back for another question perhaps later on.

Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

It was our weekend to look after the grandkids, so I'm a little bit more familiar with diaper waste than I care to be. But I have no idea where it went and probably don't want to know either.

Mr. Harley, do you actually peel off any gas from your product?

Mr. Dale Harley: In the case of our two existing facilities in London and here in Ottawa, no. They are aerobic digesters as opposed to anaerobic digesters, so as a result of that, we're not doing that here. We do that actually—

● (1615)

Hon. John McKay: If you had to do it over again, would you do it that way or not?

Mr. Dale Harley: To be honest, probably not, from the point of view that we are very successful at helping municipalities remove waste from the waste stream using the technologies and methodologies that we are using today.

Hon. John McKay: But what happens to the GHGs that are generated by the stuff you have in your shop?

Mr. Dale Harley: Well, essentially virtually none are produced from the point of view that the methane is produced when material decays over a long period of time. We use an in-vessel composting technology as well. It's in vessel for approximately five to ten days, depending on what the feedstock is. As a result of that, we're not creating methane gas.

One thing we do capture and we want to capture is the ammonia we get from this waste. Our ammonia scrubbers remove that, and we produce a by-product called ammonium sulphate. That originally was material we would actually pay to have disposed. We've now received Canadian Food Inspection Agency certification for that and we sell that back to the agricultural community so they can put it onto their fields. So we're quite comfortable with the methodology we have.

Hon. John McKay: Just before I let you go, with regard to the anaerobic exercise, I was presented with a concept. This guy was going to set up a facility opposite the Toronto Zoo and he was going to collect the zoo poo and dump it all, and then he had a contract with Loblaws to pick up all of their excess food waste and dump that in as well. The concept was to use the methane and I don't know what else to run a generator and feed the grid.

Do you have an opinion about that stuff?

Mr. Dale Harley: Yes, from the point of view that we do that ourselves in a number of our facilities in Europe, and in fact, one of our facilities that we're looking at building elsewhere in Canada will be including an AD component.

I might just say that it's a perception, diapers. You have to remember that this material is being processed at a minimum of 72 hours at 55°C, which kills all of the pathogens, kills salmonella, and everything that is bad. It's all tested before it can go to a farmer's field to be sure that you have destroyed this material.

That material, whether it is in the form of biosolids, which comes from your waste water treatment facilities, has a very high nutrient value. So don't say "boo to poo" because it does have the opportunity to make a positive contribution.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Conrad, I was interested in your comment about using the commercial application of solid waste and the energy that it could generate. I was given a presentation about cement facilities and they are highly energy intensive. They were hunting around for a bunch of garbage to use in their facility, so that the garbage, in effect, became a feedstock. You mentioned you had a small cement facility and I just wonder what your thoughts were on that.

Mr. Larry Conrad: Certainly, I've been working probably for the last 10 years trying to do some projects at a cement plant in Mississauga. There are some very serious political and social issues in the neighbourhood, but the technology is such that the last time we looked at it, it was taking waste wood from our waste streams: off-cuts from housing, stuff from your house, old furniture, etc.

We looked at whether or not we could use the waste wood in the cement kiln. It's a very valuable source of fuel for some concrete plants in the world. In Germany, I know the Herhof plants, for one, produce a product called Stabilat that's fed into the concrete plants. It's very definitely a very viable option.

In Quebec, there are a couple of plants doing that already. In Ontario, most of the plants are burning some liquid waste—waste fuels, solvents, and that sort of stuff—and they do so with the full approval of the ministry of the environment.

Just before the last election in Ontario, there was some work put forward to start looking at heavily industrialized sources burning coal. That sort of died with the election, but the object there was that they were going to exempt, with due course, some of those processes from some of the environmental approvals required to do it. It is a very valuable process around the world and I know it's being done in Quebec.

● (1620)

Hon. John McKay: Can you take some of the carbon production and shoot it into the cement product as well?

Mr. Larry Conrad: The nice thing about concrete kilns—I'm not a concrete guy, I'm a garbage and landfill guy, so I don't really know 100% of the technology—is that when you put stuff into the kiln, it pretty much encapsulates the waste. You have to worry about some of the exhaust coming off, but the slag that comes out of the back side binds a lot of that material up, so really when it comes out you have concrete slag and some air emissions.

Over time, you can show that this is a very viable way of handling waste. We aren't doing it in Peel, but certainly there's an example, again, in Quebec of a concrete plant that's taking industrial waste and putting it through a Stabilat process essentially—it's not a Stabilat process, sorry. It's from a Vecoplan process. But they clean it up, produce a fuel, and burn it in the incinerator, so it's viable.

The Chair: Ms. Freeman.

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Thank you.

Mr. Harley, am I correct in saying that in Canada you have only the composting technology, and that all the energy product technology is in the Netherlands? Is that right?

Mr. Dale Harley: Yes, at the moment, but I hope to have that situation changed. Talk to me in a couple of weeks' time.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: I'm going to talk to you about it now. Why is that? What's stopping that from being the case? What can the government do to help you there?

Mr. Dale Harley: There are really two questions there.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Yes, there are two questions.

Mr. Dale Harley: Let me deal with the second one first that talks about help.

Your colleague was asking about financing, about sources of funding and what the government can do. There's actually an opportunity. Because we're a large integrated company with very deep pockets, we do what they call a lot of DBOO, or design, build, own, and operate. As a result, the taxpayer is not footing the capital costs associated with setting up one of these plants in the first place.

Another model that's used is P3s. We're actually working on one of those out west right now, and part of that does include the anaerobic digester, so we will be creating energy to go back into the grid.

I guess a third source of funding, one that's very near and dear to my heart because of my previous life, is infrastructure funding. Waste management is a very large, important piece of infrastructure that Canadians need to use. I would like to see more funding coming out of the infrastructure funds, not only to help build roads, waterways, and pipelines, but also to help with the infrastructure for waste management.

I think I answered both those questions at the same time, didn't I?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Yes. My question was, more specifically, were there any barriers? But I guess it's—

Mr. Dale Harley: Yes. The answer to that is the first two plants.... Typically we build plants for municipal clients, and it was at their specifications, which did not have an energy-to-waste requirement. Therefore, we did not do it. But for some other ones we are looking at, it is a requirement, so we're just being responsive to what our clients are asking us to do.

● (1625)

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Sorry, it just made me think a little bit about.... The Federation of Canadian Municipalities was here last week and they were talking about the need for long-term predictable funding. I'm seeing nods, but I guess that's something that is a general ask for private and for municipalities.

Mr. Dale Harley: Due to my other lives—one as a municipal politician and another as a lobbyist for infrastructure—I am a big proponent of the federal infrastructure programs. Please find a way to work together with the provinces and municipalities and get that funding out for us.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Great.

This question is to both of you and follows where Ms. Ambler's questions ended. Is there a role the federal government has in making sure we are encouraging citizens to participate in recycling and reuse programs? Is there anything we can do, from both your perspectives?

Mr. Dale Harley: Actually, I think I alluded to it—or I tried not to allude to it; I tried to be very specific about it. That is to institute a national coordinated program where you force people to ban waste going to landfills and to increase diversion. I gave you a couple of examples of how it's being done in Europe. The easiest thing to do is to get people to vote with their pocketbooks.

When I was a municipal councillor, I introduced a tag-a-bag program. My constituents absolutely hated me for doing that. They said that it was going to cost them, that they were paying taxes already. Once they saw how it worked and the fact that the municipal waste was taken off their tax bill, they saw they were getting a credit for that. They saw how, just by putting in a little bit of effort to divert, they were saving dollars. It makes a lot of good sense.

If we can create that environment on a national basis to encourage more municipalities, to encourage either with a carrot or with a stick, we'll translate that into more people participating in programs.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Does Mr. Conrad have enough time to answer as well?

The Chair: He does.

Mr. Larry Conrad: I believe a couple of things need to be done. I think one of the things is that the national carbon credit registry would go a long way in exciting people on that. There are some investment opportunities around North America for greenhouse gas credits.

The other thing is that we just need a solid, concerted effort to remind people of the environment more often. We need to make them aware of life choices. You see a lot of things right now around organic waste, especially around protecting, not over-consuming, organics, kitchen materials, vegetables—those kinds of things. Those are policies and programs that need to be taken everywhere, not just one municipality to another municipality. It has to be a concerted effort.

I think both of those things would bring some interest.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll move to Mr. Sopuck for five minutes, please.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Thanks.

Regarding the goal of 100% diversion, why aren't we at 100% right now, given how...?

Mr. Conrad, you talked about the job benefits and the environmental benefits and all the benefits. So why aren't we there now?

Mr. Larry Conrad: We aren't there because I don't believe we're going to get there. It's a struggle. You'll always have something that you can't divert from waste. Asbestos waste, for instance; you deal with asbestos waste in kitchen tiles and whatnot.

I think we need to set realistic and obtainable goals. I think what we as municipal people have done in the past is to say that we can divert 90% of our garbage, or 70% of our garbage. I think we've set some unrealistic goals. I think 50% right now is very achievable. With an EFW or energy-from-waste component, or using some of the biomass capabilities from waste products, I think we can get to the next 20%. Getting to 90% will take a lot of time and effort and a lot of changes.

In the past I've talked about Crest toothpaste. People buy Crest toothpaste, and it's in a package. When people say, “Why do we need a package for Crest toothpaste?”, I ask them, “Would your wife or your mother go out and buy a tube of Crest toothpaste that wasn't properly sealed? How would they know it wasn't contaminated?” Some of those things we're always going to get. We need to get packagers to become more involved in their packaging.

We're going there with the EPR program, or environmental producer responsibility program—sorry for all the acronyms—but in each province around the country they're very limited. They're very indirect. We need to nationalize them, if we can, and roll them out. One does not fit all, but everybody should be involved in those kinds of programs.

● (1630)

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Harley.

Mr. Dale Harley: I want to disagree with Larry, I'm sorry. Maybe not 100% is possible, but I do believe that 99.9% is possible.

I think there are really two things keeping us from getting there. The first thing is alternatives that are cheaper. When I say “alternatives”, I'm talking about landfilling. As a former municipal politician who had a landfill in my municipality, it was just so damn attractive to save money by shipping it off there. It was short-term thinking, because landfills are long-term problems.

If you created the stick part of what I was getting at before by making it more expensive by putting in place a landfill tax, you would find that people would be a lot more interested in finding an alternative. Once you have the stick, match it with the carrot, which is the social marketing to make people aware of what they can do to become more responsible. Particularly youth today are much more likely to jump on that bandwagon.

It won't happen overnight, but I do believe it can be done. We have a saying in our business, “Making more from waste”. We feel that waste is an asset. It's a resource that needs to be managed properly, not only for the betterment of the environment but to make money. I'm all for doing that as well.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Yes, but again, that making money depends on a subsidy, to be quite blunt. That's what you're asking for, which is fair ball. Anybody can ask for what they want. But the issue for me—

Mr. Dale Harley: I'm not asking for a subsidy, sir. I'm asking for a level playing field. I'm asking municipalities and governments to stop subsidizing people—

Mr. Robert Sopuck: You are asking for a landfill tax, and a tax is a tax is a tax. Call it what you want; it's asking the public to pony up more money to go to the 99% diversion. This is a legitimate request —I am not saying it's not—but let's call it what it is.

The interesting thing is that there is an old saying, “To govern is to choose.” When one looks at the environmental priorities for a region, Mr. Harley, would the diversion of waste from a landfill be the absolute number one environmental priority of any municipality?

Mr. Dale Harley: The answer to that would depend on where the municipality was located and what the situation was. Where I came from, we had a landfill that the city itself had been running for numerous years, and quite frankly, doing a crappy job at it. As a result, we had some environmental challenges that were going to cost millions of dollars to fix. We were using taxpayers' money to subsidize a shell game to make them think that they were saving money by not having to pay to have their waste disposed of through tag a bag, or something else, and instead paid money behind them to be able to fix the environmental damages that they had caused.

To answer your question, it depends.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Choquette, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I disagree with Mr. Sopuck, of course. What is important is the polluter pays principle. At the moment, we give $1.3 billion to the oil and gas industry. We could use that money to encourage practices other than pollution. That is what the polluter pays principle is. Good practices must be supported and practices generating more pollution must be discouraged. We want what we can call ecological practices.

It has always surprised me that we are doing a federal-level study like this on managing municipal waste. That is why I see it as important for you to talk about. Mostly, municipalities and provinces take care of managing waste, but we have heard witnesses say that Canada's waste management record is the worst in the world. I was really surprised to learn that; I did not know. I would like to give you another chance to talk about your recommendations.

Mr. Harley, I think you talked about a national program to reduce waste to zero. Could you go into that idea more?

Mr. Conrad, I think you talked about a greenhouse gas registry and about carbon credits. Could you talk about what people call the cap-and-trade system?

I would like to know what your recommendations to the federal government are.

The floor is yours.

● (1635)

[*English*]

Mr. Dale Harley: In terms of a national program, you are right, sir. When I was asked to come here, my first reaction was, why am I coming to address a federal committee? Municipal waste is the responsibility of the municipality. Waste from the ICI sector is the responsibility of the provinces. The advantage was that I had to do a little bit of research, and I started looking at where programs were successful and where programs were not successful. I found that programs were successful when there was a national program that encouraged all jurisdictions to be active participants in working toward a collective goal. If some jurisdictions had one set of rules and other jurisdictions had another, you ended up in a situation where people started shipping waste.

One of the biggest deterrents to waste management solutions in Ontario is Michigan. You can ship your waste across the border, dump it in somebody else's backyard, and have somebody else take care of it. I think we should be responsible, and that's where you, as the federal government, should be responsible, in terms of ensuring that a national program is in place.

I want to touch very briefly on your comment about put or pay. I am a little sensitive about that, because my Ottawa facility has had a contract dispute with the City of Ottawa about put or pay. When I came back to making the argument about the design, build, own, operate, my shareholders need to invest millions, if not hundreds of millions of dollars. We can't help a municipality do that by building a multimillion-dollar facility but not receiving enough waste to be able to justify that investment. Put or pay helps keep both parties honest. It encourages the municipalities to send you the waste, and it makes you honest by making sure that you build the right capacity to be able to deal with what you need to deal with.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: I think you only have 30 seconds left, Mr. Conrad.

Did you talk about the cap-and-trade system? What did you mean exactly?

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Conrad: Well, I would say it's a good idea. I would say that if we look at how we can fund some of the crowdfunding stuff that we've done—the anaerobic digester that's built in Toronto is one of those crowdfunding things—the cap and trade is an important system that can be put in place to help raise funds for viable projects and make waste projects look at other things besides energy as electrical energy. That's what I would say.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Toet, please.

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Harley and Mr. Conrad. This is very interesting.

I just want to start with a question for both of you. What's the source of energy you use in your facilities?

Mr. Dale Harley: I'm spending too much time talking, so I'll give Larry an opportunity.

Mr. Larry Conrad: We use almost exclusively electrical energy in our facilities to do all of our powering. Most facilities around do that. Not too many are self-sustaining, although I have this dream that one day we can co-digest anaerobic sludge from the waste water treatment plant, and sludge from our SSO facility at our waste water treatment plant in either Clarkson or Lakeview, and produce enough power so that you have an off-loop plant treating waste. I think that would be cool, but most of our energy uses electricity.

● (1640)

Mr. Lawrence Toet: Mr. Harley.

Mr. Dale Harley: Most of our energy use is electricity as well, but I'd like to stress that we do not use electricity to heat the material. That's actually done naturally by the composting process itself. Where we're using electricity is predominantly in the operation of our fans to make sure that the air is moving through the process to be able to encourage the composting process in the tunnel, and also to ensure that we keep our building under negative air pressure.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: What about your Greenmills facility in the Netherlands? How familiar are you with that?

Mr. Dale Harley: Do you know what? An excellent question. Invite me back on December 20 when I come back. I'm going over there for a tour. I'll be honest, I'm very new in this job. I just started in August of this year as their general manager, and I've yet to learn everything, but that's one of my facilities that I'm really looking forward to touring.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: You'll enjoy that. I was actually there about a year and a half ago, and they do supply their own energy for their own facility there. I think if you're going to come here and preach about energy from waste and things like this, I think it's really helpful if, going forward, we really look at it—

Mr. Dale Harley: I will accept that's a justifiable criticism.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: In principle, there's nothing better than being able to say, look, we're doing actually what we're talking about.

Mr. Dale Harley: Yes.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: The other point I wanted to make was regarding a landfill tax that we had talked about, and Mr. Sopuck had raised that. I think the key component there, and I hope you'd agree with it, is that it only works if there's an alternative. We have facilities, I know, in Winnipeg. There's a landfill tax there that you pay if you bring your own materials there, but it's the only alternative you have. So it really has no effect in forcing people to do otherwise. It's only a way of raising funds for the landfill itself.

I just wanted to ask you a question, Mr. Harley, regarding your product. You talked about your AA compost and the supply and demand for that product. You said that the demand essentially is outstripping the supply. I'm just wondering about two things on that. What's the attraction to the product? Why are you having such a high demand on this product?

Mr. Dale Harley: The reason for the high demand on the product is that farmers, through the field tests that we have done, whether just with the farmers or through OMAFRA, have demonstrated how effective our compost is at rehabilitating the soil, giving it structure, helping it retain moisture, which we want our farmers to be able to do. The other aspect is that it has a high nitrogen content, and I might add, higher in nitrogen when you put diapers in it.

As a result, it eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers, which quite frankly resemble a drug to land. It's the crack cocaine of soil rehabilitation. It just makes more sense to close the loop so that what comes off the farm eventually goes back onto the farm and helps rehabilitate that soil and provide the nutrient value that's required.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: Are you able to share with us what your return on investment is on that particular product line?

Mr. Dale Harley: We're a private company. I would like to stress that we make our money at both ends of the process. Municipalities or companies in the ICI sector pay us a tipping fee to take their material. We then process it into compost and sell it at the back end as well. I don't want to encourage too much my competition to get as good at it as we are, but it is a viable business.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: The reason I asked the question, obviously, is that if you have a solid return on that investment, you have a product where the demand is outstripping the supply and it allows you to sell it probably at a fairly good premium, like you say, because of the nitrogen additives that it already has. It won't have to have these other additives in the fields. It just comes back to that whole completing the circle.

We talk a lot about opportunities for investment. Ultimately, we know that the profitability margin is what will really drive the waste management cycle to the completion that we want. Do you see this coming in the future, Mr. Harley, that it will actually be able to drive itself?

● (1645)

Mr. Dale Harley: We've talked a lot about using plastics in kilns. In Canada, we actually would pay someone to take it right now, at a reduced tipping fee, to use it as a source of energy. In Europe, where the market's much more developed, they pay us. The long-term answer to your question is, yes, it will become more viable.

The Chair: Okay, we have two more questioners on the list at this point.

Mr. Choquette, and then Mr. Woodworth....

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Does Mr. Woodworth want to start?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): I can start if you like.

[*English*]

I am interested in asking some questions to Mr. Conrad about the energy-from-waste facility, and I'll come right to the point.

Forgive me, I should also say thank you for being here.

The energy-from-waste facility, I have to assume, produces energy. Is that electrical energy?

Mr. Larry Conrad: Yes.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: What is the output?

Mr. Larry Conrad: The output of our plant is yet to be determined. We went away from the energy-from-waste plant that was in Brampton for many years and we're developing another one. It's going to be about 300,000 tonnes a year and it's going to be probably, I think, but I'm not one hundred per cent sure, around 25 megawatts of power. But it will be electrical power.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Now I just have to ask you a little bit more about that. You've changed plants recently from Brampton to where?

Mr. Larry Conrad: It started out that we had an agreement with the Peel Resource Recovery Plant, and through the years it was sold. It ended up being the Algonquin Power plant. We had a 20-year contract, which was extended to about 25 years, I believe. At the end of that contract, we couldn't come to a successful extension from a number of sides. After council said that Peel really needed to own its infrastructure, we decided that instead of going on and trying to do something with that plant, we needed to go out and develop a facility that would be our own.

We're anticipating that 2019 will be about the time we start to build that infrastructure. Peel really should have owned the energy-from-waste plant when it started, but it didn't start off on that path. Now we're going to own for the next 40 years. We're looking forward to the next 40 years, not the past.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Is there going to be a gap or are you going to continue with the Algonquin Power plant until 2019?

Mr. Larry Conrad: Unfortunately, there's a gap now. About a year and a half ago we stopped going there. We're going to the landfill and we're using the money saved from the tipping fees that were going to that plant to help offset the costs of building the new facility in Peel.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: What do you expect the total capital cost of building the new facility will be?

Mr. Larry Conrad: The new facility costs right now are in and around $500 million.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: You mentioned in the course of your testimony two federal funding streams that you were applying for, but I don't know if that was in relation to the construction of this new facility or not.

Mr. Larry Conrad: One was for the compost and getting that compost marketing into agricultural applications. The other one was a little bit earlier and we were looking at an energy-from-waste scenario, mixing sorted and dried municipal waste with sewage sludge. We got a grant there, but unfortunately, the economics at the time wasn't quite right for that.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Do you have any plan to access any of the green infrastructure funding that the Government of Canada has available in its myriad infrastructure funding plans for this $500-million facility?

Mr. Larry Conrad: Yes, of course we do.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Do you have an expectation, or at least a hope, of how much of that $500 million might be available from the Government of Canada?

Mr. Larry Conrad: I know we're talking about it and I know we're going to make the applications for it, but we're still at the point where we don't even know yet what our plant is going to cost us. We've gone through the request for expressions of interest and in March of 2015 we'll actually go out with some requests for proposals. Until we get that we don't really know how much we should even be asking for.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Will the new facility be an incineration facility entirely, or not?

● (1650)

Mr. Larry Conrad: We have a facility in Peel. It's a marvellous facility. It's three football fields long, split down the middle. Half of it's a MRF, a materials recovery facility, and half of it is a waste transfer station and our composting facility.

The concept is that we will relocate the MRF and the energy-from-waste plant will be built there. Then in the future we'll also be able to co-locate an anaerobic digestion facility there, or a front end if we do a project at one of our sewage treatment plants for co-digestion.

It's a marvellous piece of land and that's where it will be. It's owned by Peel in Peel, close to the 407 off Torbram Road.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I'm insufficiently technical about this to know whether or not you can get power out of an anaerobic digestion system or only by burning. Can you help me out with that?

Mr. Larry Conrad: Sure, an anaerobic digestion plant, whether it's a dry plant or a wet plant—meaning with water or just in an enclosed space—will produce other gases but the majority will be methane gas, the same as you get off the grid now if you have heat by gas. It will be methane gas from the pit, which is exactly identical.

Some people call it renewable natural gas, but yes, you can use that as a fuel source for transportation—you've probably heard about the Robert trucks that are running on compressed natural gas—or you can produce power. We have a landfill gas plant in our area at our Britannia landfill site where we produce five megawatts of power going into the grid, burning the same kind of gas.

The Chair: That's all the time you have.

Mr. Choquette, go ahead please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses today for their recommendations. From a federal perspective, they are really interesting.

The federal government indeed has a role to play. It must not play every role, but it can play an important role, as you rightly mentioned. You mentioned two aspects at least. I hope that those aspects will be part of a report on the matter some day and that it will not gather dust on a shelf.

I am going to move quickly to another matter. Last week, a recent study was published in PLOS ONE. The study mentioned that, of the 369 imperiled species under the Species at Risk Act, the situation of115 of them has become worse, and 202 others have not improved at all, even though they are in peril.

That is why I want to introduce the following two motions.

Given the very minor improvement in the situation of species at risk, the first motion reads:

> That the committee conduct a study on the implementation and funding of the Species at Risk Act.

As we would be beginning a new study, the other motion would be as follows:

> That the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development end the examination of witnesses for the study on the management of municipal solid waste and industrial materials and proceed to the stage of consideration of a report.

[*English*]

The Chair: There is a motion on the floor. We're distributing the copies of the motion.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: May I ask a point of order type of question, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Are we intending at this time to consider the motion, or is it simply being tabled for future note?

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Choquette.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: We are ready to consider the motions.

I would also like to mention something I really appreciated last time. Another member of the committee said that it was not necessary to go in camera to vote on motions. A Conservative said that. I think it was Mr. Calandra.

I also feel that it is not necessary always to go in camera. We can do it in public.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I want to thank our colleague Monsieur Choquette for arranging things so that this motion would be introduced pretty much at the tail end of the questioning of these witnesses, so that they will not be inconvenienced if we do go in camera to consider it, or at least not inconvenienced much.

As is our usual practice, I move that we go in camera to consider this.

● (1655)

The Chair: We have a motion on the floor to go in camera to consider committee business. That motion is not debatable. All in favour of the motion?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Could we get a recorded vote on that?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: The motion is carried. We will move in camera.

Let me just thank our witnesses for being with us today. Thank you very much for sharing your expertise with us. We wish you the best in your ongoing challenges and the work that you do to protect our environment and hopefully also to make a profitable business case.

We'll suspend for two minutes.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]