

Opposition to biosolids growing in Kings County

By GORDON DELANEY Valley Bureau <http://thechronicleherald.ca/NovaScotia/1151617.html>
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Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly and Rae Wallin, president and CEO of N-Viro Systems Canada Ltd., look over some of the systems at the Biosolids Processing Facility in May of last year. (Darren Pittman / Staff)

KENTVILLE — Opposition to the use of biosolids on farmland in Kings County is continuing to grow. Kings County council recently passed a resolution asking the province for a moratorium on its use and farm markets are adopting policies that would ban any vendors who use it.

And the Nova Scotia Environmental Network has asked for a plebiscite on the issue. County council wants the moratorium on biosolids until more study is done or a plan devised, Warden Fred Whalen said in an interview Friday.

"Council doesn't have a lot of options because the province would reign supreme on it. Their decision can be final," he said. "But we have written a letter asking (the province) to hold off implementation and keep biosolids from coming into Kings County until we've had a chance

to review and prepare for it."

He said the county would like more time to study the issue, including whether biosolids should be processed locally. Council passed its resolution at a special meeting last week. It was attended by about 60 people who came to show their support for a ban against the use of biosolids.

"There is concern among councillors but certainly with citizens too," said Mr. Whalen.

The biosolids come from Halifax Regional Municipality's N-Viro facility, which takes sewage sludge from residential, hospital, industrial, street runoff and commercial sources. The bacteria in the sludge are destroyed at the N-Viro plant.

Some farmers are using biosolids as fertilizer on their fields, which is much cheaper than the conventional nitrogen and potassium fertilizers.

The Nova Scotia Environmental Network has asked for a ban on its use on farm and public lands in the province. It believes biosolids contain contaminants that are not being eliminated in the treatment process.

The network says N-Viro plans to spread 34,000 tonnes of the material on 4,800 hectares of land in the province each year.

Marilyn Cameron, chairwoman of the network's biosolids and waste water caucus, said thousands of tonnes of HRM's treated sludge have been transported and dispersed onto farmland in Kings County this year. She believes the county's request for a moratorium is a good starting point, but it's the province that has to be convinced because the Municipal Government and Environment acts will have to be amended. She has asked for help from local NDP MLAs Ramona Jennex and Jim Morton.

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