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NEWS

HSPPP

SCRD reacts to debris burning plan

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STAFF WRITER

Directors on the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) are asking many of the same questions other Coast local governments did about Howe Sound Pulp and Paper's (HSPPP) plan to burn construction and demolition debris for energy.

SCRD directors got their chance to put questions to Al Strang, HSPPP's manager of environment and external relations, at the infrastructure services committee meeting June 3. Questions centred around exactly what materials will be tossed into HSPPP's power boiler, what emissions will be coming out and what is involved in the testing for environmental effects.

HSPPP currently has a

temporary two-year permit from the Ministry of Environment (MOE) to burn the debris and study the environmental effects. Results from the study will be made public for a series of public meetings in September and October. MOE will use the test data and comment gathered from local governments, the public and interest groups to determine if HSPPP should have its permit made permanent.

Roberts Creek director and board chair Donna Shugar wanted to know if plastic would be included in the material to be burned and if so, how much.

Strang said the debris goes through a picking line and air density separator, which removes much of the plastic though it is not possible to guarantee every bit of plastic will be removed.

"We're doing testing on the wood. There is a small amount of plastic. The average is about one per cent by weight," he said.

Eric Graham, director for Pender Harbour-Egmont, raised the concern of how reputable the company doing the separating is.

Strang said HSPPP does regular audits of the company's work and is in the process of negotiating a contract that would include quality control as an aspect of the contract.

Lee Turbull, director for West Howe Sound, where HSPPP is located, questioned Strang on what is involved in the environmental testing.

Strang said the company, along with a consulting firm and MOE, are monitoring the contents of what comes out of HSPPP's stack and plugging it into

a dispersion model that predicts how particulate and chemical output will be changed in the airshed which ranges from north of Squamish, south of Howe Sound and most of the Sunshine Coast.

"We've been doing the monitoring since last fall," Strang said. "We haven't noted any substantial differences between the two types of fuels."

Strang said HSPPP has also been monitoring air quality and concentration of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, both precursors to acid rain, in Langdale for about 15 years

"We'll continue to monitor those parameters as we have since the mid-1990s," he said.

He said due to factors in geology and climate, acid rain is largely not an issue on the West Coast.

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