

Dump plan a tax grab in disguise, Liberals claim

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Yvonne Jones says many municipal leaders are not keen on a government plan to truck garbage to three large dumps. (CBC)

A Newfoundland and Labrador government plan to create three regional dumps while closing dozens of small incinerators and landfills will wind up hurting the very communities the plan is meant to serve, an Opposition politician says.

Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones told the house of assembly Thursday that her office surveyed municipalities across the province. She said 55 per cent of responding communities don't like fees they will pay to have their garbage trucked far away.

"Information received from municipal leaders is indicating that the cost of garbage collection and disposal has risen by nearly 500 per cent for some of these municipalities over a period of three years," Jones said.

But Municipal Affairs Minister Dianne Whalen said the increase adds up to about \$150 per household.

"It is a strategy that you cannot afford not to buy into," Whalen said.

"In some cases I have been told that it works out to somewhere in the vicinity of half a cup of coffee ... That is what it boils down to, to protect our environment," said Whalen.

She added that government is reviewing the costs passed on to towns more than 100 kilometres away from one of the regional waste sites.

But outside the house, Yvonne Jones said that argument does not hold up for towns that have already lost residents, who have moved away for work.

"They have the largest level of outmigration per capita, so their tax base is actually shrinking," Jones said.

"That's why they're expressing these concerns right now."

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