

Metro considers sending its trash to Washington state

Booming economy triggers surge in amount of garbage

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Trainloads of trash from Metro Vancouver will be dumped in southern Washington state if Metro Vancouver mayors and councillors give the green light Friday to large-scale garbage exports.

Metro's top official says B.C.'s booming economy has triggered a garbage "surge" and the regional district's landfill at Cache Creek will be full by 2010.

Johnny Carline, the regional government's chief administrative officer, told The Vancouver Sun's editorial board Wednesday that Vancouver and Delta won't accept more trash at the City of Vancouver-owned dump at Burns Bog in Delta.

And Carline said the "waste-to-energy" plants that Metro Vancouver wants to build here are still years away, so the only alternative in the short term is to send garbage across the international border -- likely to the Rabanco Companies-operated Roosevelt Regional Landfill.

That landfill, near the Washington-Oregon border and the Columbia River, is a 780-km one-way railway journey from Vancouver.

Semi-trailer trucks are now hauling about 500,000 tonnes of Metro Vancouver's trash annually to an arid Fraser Canyon hillside south of Cache Creek. One way, it's a 345-km road trip.

The trucks return, full of wood chips for paper, making it a 690-km round trip.

Carline said he expects the region will stop sending its trash to Cache Creek by early 2010.

"It may be earlier than that, if in fact the current surge of garbage continues to fill it up and we get an alternative in the U.S. earlier," he added.

Toivo Allas, manager of Metro Vancouver's policy and planning department, said



CREDIT: Mark Van Manen, Vancouver Sun
 Massive pile of Metro Vancouver garbage is compacted at the 225-hectare Vancouver dump in Delta. Metro garbage may soon be taken by train to a dump in Washington state.