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Moscow Region's Largest Landfill Closed After Complaints to Putin

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The Moscow region's Kuchino landfill site has closed its doors after residents appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Household waste has been dumped at the former quarry in the town of Balashikha since 1964. The landfill is currently as high as a 20-story building and visible from outer space.

The Kuchino landfill was thrust into the national spotlight on June 15, when local residents complained to the president during his annual call-in marathon, "Direct Line." They told Putin that the site stood just 200 meters from local homes, kindergartens and hospitals.

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Alexander Kogan, Ecology Minister for the Moscow region, said that it would cost as estimated 4 billion rubles ($67 million) to reclaim the site. He said that the area could be

converted into a leisure and recreation area, with the possibility of opening ski pistes or walking trails.

"We very much hope that in two years, when the landfill is finally reclaimed, residents will see it as a place to spend their free time," Kogan told Russia's Interfax news agency.

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