

**Why the Minneapolis Planning Commission said NO to a proposed Conditional Use Permit allowing the Downtown Garbage Incinerator (HERC) to burn 212 more tons of garbage per day:**

**Excerpts from Minneapolis City Planning Commission Minutes of June 22, 2009 (direct quotes are in blue):**

*Action: Notwithstanding staff recommendation, the City Planning Commission denied the amended conditional use permit for a waste disposal facility at the property of 419 N 5th St (aka 505 6th Ave N), based on the following findings:*

*1. Increasing the capacity of the garbage burner, in all probability, could be detrimental to public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.*

*2. Increasing the capacity of the garbage burner, in all probability, could be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and, in all probability, could impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.*

*3. This use is not consistent with some policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including the following: 7.1, 7.8, 7.11, and 7.12.*

**Covanta speaks to the first required finding on Public Health effects, responding to questions by Mpls School Board Member, Carla Bates in this excerpt from the June 22, 2009 public hearing:**

**Commissioner Bates:** "I'm a little confused about all these comparisons to potential landfills in Wisconsin and all this and because we're also, for this conditional use permit, supposed to be really focused in on Minneapolis, right, and the area around the burner. I would like to know, just yes or no, will burning more garbage increase the amount of particulates, dioxins and other wastes in the air?"

**Jeffrey Hahn:** Yes, it will increase it in a very small amount because we will burn 212 tons more per day for so many days. It's not the 20 percent you say because the 1212...

**Commissioner Bates:** I understand, I just was curious of yes or no. So, yes, it will increase the pollutants in the air. Thank you. Has there been a study of the soil or the river or any other possible sinks that have measured any sort of appreciable accumulation of pollutants in the area that may be related to the burner?

**Jeffrey Hahn:** Not that I'm aware of, but that's what the EIS in its pathways, creates with computer modeling when they talk about deposition onto the soil. They look at wet and dry deposition and accumulation in the soil.

**Commissioner Bates:** But it's only been modeled, it hasn't been actually studied. Is that correct?

**Jeffrey Hahn:** That's correct. In an urban area where you have so many other sources of emissions and pollutants, you could study that but it would not necessarily have anything to do with...

**Commissioner Bates:** But it hasn't been studied yet.

**Jeffrey Hahn:** Not to my knowledge. The PCA may have, I don't know..."

**The Answer** re: any comprehensive Environmental Impact Study (EIS) since the models predicting the environmental/public health impacts back in 1986 (before the Burner was even in operation) is this: **NONE HAVE BEEN DONE.**

The 1986 studies of toxic emission plumes from the Garbage Burner predicted Hot Spots of accumulated toxins in several areas of North and South Minneapolis. One predicted area of concern was as far out as the North Minneapolis/Fridley border! The staff of the Planning Department relied on a "mini" EIS covering only the patterns of toxic emissions and public health effects predicted in the area around the new Twin's "Open Air" Stadium right next door to make their recommendation.

**This following quotation gives the final comments of Zoning and Planning Chair, Council Member Gary Schiff:**  
Commissioner Schiff:

"I think the staff report has really misinterpreted how we should measure the environmental impact study of the ballpark. This [recently submitted] EIS really only looks at the effect of the ballpark on the air dispersion model of the plant. It doesn't look at the effect of the pollutants on the surrounding area. This site is part of a neighborhood; it's not just a site that's going to affect ballpark users and ballpark employees. There's residential nearby, there's office workers.

When you look at the data in the EIS, you look at what happens when you expose somebody who watches a game for a couple hours or even a season ticket holder for 81 games a year. When you try to look at who is getting affected by people who live in the area, people who work in the area for multiple years, you see that data's not there.

After reviewing the EIS, the staff report concludes that there are no adverse affects anticipated and I don't see that anywhere in the actual EIS, it doesn't say that. It says that the affects are within the measurable allowable permits that have been granted, which is a whole different question than what we're being asked to find. We're being asked to find.

*We're being asked to determine today that there will be no endangerment of public health, safety, comfort or general welfare. Looking at the particulate matter, looking at the other emittents in this report, I don't know what science you'd have to rely on to make that statement, but it can't be science based on fact as we know it because we know otherwise. I'm also going to vote no and ask Hennepin County to reconsider this ill thought out plan."*

- We should ALL be asking Hennepin County to reconsider this ill-thought-out plan for managing our solid waste.

- We should ALL be asking the City Council Members to come to the same conclusion as CM Gary Schiff and vote NO on Covanta's Appeal of this carefully considered decision. The required findings for the proposed Conditional Use Permit cannot be met, by Covanta's own admission!

- We should ALL be asking Hennepin County and the City Council WHY we are allowing the HERC to burn 1000 tons of garbage per day without any full Environmental Impact Studies to measure the effects of the toxic emissions, spewed over the past 24 years, on the public health of our citizens?

*The contact information for your Council Member and County Commissioner are listed on this site.*

PLEASE NOTE: The Appeal hearing has been postponed several times because Covanta has not submitted the basic information required by the state Pollution Control Agency to do a cursory environmental review, in the form of a Environmental Assessment Worksheet. It most likely will be postponed again from the latest December 2011 date due to this lack of submitted data.

*But your elected representatives, charged with protecting your "health, safety, comfort and general welfare," should hear from you TODAY. Please spread the word. Thank you.*