

Mpls Residents Discuss Garbage Garbage Plan

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MINNEAPOLIS - Residents are arguing over whether or not Hennepin Energy Resource Center should be allowed to burn 1,200 tons of trash per day, instead of the 1,000 tons allowed right now.

Neighbors against the burner live mostly down wind from the facility in the North Loop neighborhood or even St. Paul. They took their fight to a public hearing with the Minneapolis Planning commission. They argue the plan to burn more trash takes Minneapolis in the wrong direction. Supporters of the facility point out its less to the landfill. But the biggest issue is what some feel are major health risks that go along with burning garbage.

The burner is run by Covanta Energy. They say emissions are already way below the federal health standards. "The major stumbling blocks with any application are if you go over the threshold and that's what the county and commission is committed to staying under," said Jeffery Hahn of Covanta Energy.

Incinerator representatives also say allowing the increase will mean additional steam which will generate more energy for heating and cooling downtown buildings. "The energy that it sells to its customers downtown will be able to benefit from that steam and reduce the amount of gas and fuel oil," said Hennepin County Director of Environmental Service Carl Michaud.

Opponents say that may be true, but the health risks are just too great.

The planning commission tabled the issue to further study how much emissions will really be effected. There will be a vote on whether to give the go ahead on June 22nd.