

**East
Phillips
Improvement
Coalition**

6/8/2009

To: Minneapolis Planning Commission and Minneapolis City Council
Re: Covanta Energy request to increase Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC) garbage burning tonnage by 20%

Dear Commissioners:

The Board of Directors of the East Phillips Improvement Coalition voted unanimously at its June 6th meeting to oppose Covanta Energy's application for an amendment to its 1987 Conditional Use Permit, to allow it to increase the garbage tonnage that it burns from 1,000 tons per day to 1,212 tons per day.

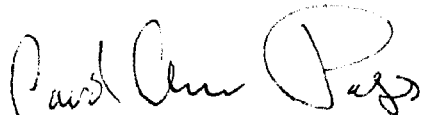
We are aware the HERC/MPCA Air Emission Permit expired in 2003 and that apparently there has been no comprehensive MPCA review of the HERC facility for more than 5 years. Given that this is a 22 year old facility which burns many potentially hazardous pollutants, surely a complete and rigorous review should take place before considering approval of allowing any additional emitted pollutants. Lacking a current review, it is at least possible that this facility is not even in compliance with current regulatory requirements.

The community of East Phillips educated itself regarding these issues in the effort to respond to the effort to site the Midtown EcoEnergy Biomass Plant in our neighborhood. Armed with information from a variety of sources, in particular the University of Minnesota Department of Public Health, we learned that certain emissions, including particulate matter of 2.5 microns and smaller (PM2.5), were not required in air emission permits issued 5 years ago. Since that time, the EPA has tightened the limits for PM 2.5. These particles are now the focus of a lot of attention for their very serious health effects. They are capable of carrying heavy metals and other contaminants, and can cross from the lungs to the bloodstream, and sometimes the brain barrier. They can contribute to inflammation of blood vessels, asthma, heart disease and a variety of other serious health conditions, as well as ongoing cellular degradation.

Although a number of incinerators may claim 90-95% particle capture, such capture does not include the vast majority of tiny PM2.5 particles, which are the most dangerous to humans and the environment. Unlike the larger particles, the tiny PM2.5 particles cannot be effectively captured by any emission equipment now in commercial use.

Given the seriousness of these issues, the EPIC Board opposes this expansion and wishes to see a new Environmental Impact Study completed, that actually focuses on the full environmental exposure to HERC, by the many people who actually live or work near the HERC or in areas of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Hennepin, Ramsey and surrounding counties affected by its air emission plume.

Sincerely,



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