

HERC Garbage Burner Myths and Facts

MYTH: Incineration is "environmentally preferable" to landfilling (dumping), and protects us from groundwater pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

FACT: Garbage incineration produces health-damaging air emissions, ash having to be dumped and more greenhouse gas emissions than burning coal (for the same amount of electricity generated).

MYTH: the proposed HERC burning increase will help get trash out of polluting landfills

FACT: Neither dumping or burning mixed garbage makes any sense. Both pollute, and both need to be phased out in favor of "zero waste."

MYTH: HERC is a good job provider for our community.

FACT: "Zero Waste" (recycling) programs provide more jobs than burning.

MYTH: Hennepin County is a recycling leader.

FACT: Hennepin County's recycling rate is below the Minnesota statewide average, and the County long-term recycling goal is only 45%. San Francisco's recycling rate is over 75 %, and ours could be also.

MYTH: Hennepin has recently increased its recycling and organics composting goals.

FACT: But only to 45 percent. The focus remains on burning.

MYTH: HERC has significantly lowered its air emissions

FACT: Mercury emissions were lowered years ago. Other emissions, such as NOx and PM-2.5 (fine dust) are the same as they have been since the burner opened in 1987. Covanta claims to have special technology for reducing NOx but doesn't plan to use it on the HERC.

MYTH: The HERC helps Minneapolis be a "green" and "sustainable" city.

FACT: Minneapolis' recycling rate is only about 17 percent, far below average, but Minneapolis residents suffer from more than their share of asthma and other pollution-related diseases.

MYTH: Minneapolis garbage is burned in the HERC. If Minneapolis recycles more, less will be burned.

FACT: Most of the garbage burned in the HERC does not come from Minneapolis. Under present contracts, if less Minneapolis garbage is burned, more will just be hauled into the City from the suburbs.

MYTH: Burning garbage means burning less fossil fuel.

FACT: Most of what is burned in the HERC can be recycled. Recycling saves far more energy than burning.

MYTH: The HERC is "state of the art."

FACT: The HERC started up in 1987, with an expected life of 30 years. The HERC is old, dirty, and near the end of its life cycle.

MYTH: We can trust the MPCA to regulate HERC emissions and protect our health.

FACT: The MPCA actively promotes garbage incineration, so it has a conflict of interest and can't be trusted.

MYTH: People believe in garbage incineration

FACT: Hennepin County and/or Covanta have given many organizations money to shut up about the problems of incineration. (For example "Conservation Minnesota.")

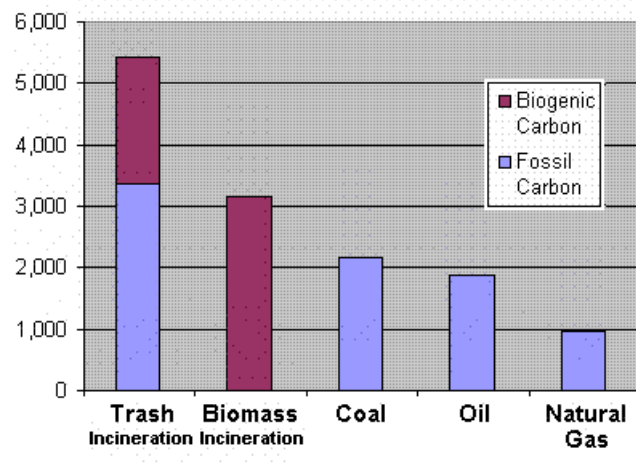
MYTH: An "Environmental Impact Statement" will give us the real facts.

FACT: Covanta and Hennepin County are opposing an EIS. What do they have to hide?

MYTH: Garbage incinerator emissions are harmless.

FACT: Incinerator emissions cause cancer, strokes, heart attacks, asthma, bronchitis, reduced intelligence in children, and other health problems.

CO2 Emissions from U.S. Electric Power Plants
in pounds of carbon pollution per unit of energy produced (lbs/MWh)



Source: U.S. EPA eGRID 2012 Database

Analysis by Energy Justice Network, www.EnergyJustice.net

<http://minneapolisneighborsforcleanair.com>