

ANNOUNCEMENT

HAMTRAMCK CITY MEDICAL INCINERATOR

PUBLIC HEARING

The State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) will hear public comments to settle the outstanding violations and to determine the operating future of the City Medical Waste Incinerator located on Christopher Street in Hamtramck. The hearing will be held at:

Hamtramck High School Cafeteria

**August 25th at 7:00 PM
11410 Charest St.**

ALL ARE INVITED - ALL ARE WELCOME

After 3 years of oversight and nearly two years after the incinerator failed its mercury emissions tests, the MDEQ has proposed a new consent order and changes to the operating permit. The State plan:

Totally eliminates testing some pollutants, including arsenic and PCBs!

Increases the allowable mercury emission standards by 180 times!

Allows the company to pay only 1/3 of its fines!

Doubles visual emissions allowed!

Allows for on sight storage of medical waste for up to 90 days without refrigeration!

Reduces incentives to recycle or minimize mercury in hospitals!

These are only a few of the 27 things wrong with the state plan.

THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD! Tell the MDEQ that we do not want this incinerator. It has polluted our air and we want it closed!

For more information, contact: HEAT - Hamtramck Environmental Action Team
1999 Trowbridge - Hamtramck, MI 48212; (313) 365-4722 or email: robc313@aol.com

Frequently Asked Questions

City Medical Waste Incinerator and the August 25th Public Hearing

Q. Why are we having another hearing? Wasn't there a hearing in 1996?

A. The June 1996 Public Hearing was held by Wayne County to adopt a consent order that we all recognized as bad for the community. The county simply ignored public opinion and allowed the incinerator to continue. In fact, it was later learned that the county had allowed the incinerator's lawyers to write the consent order, making sure that they could delay testing and avoid violations. Through the efforts of concerned citizens, locally and around the state, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) assumed an oversight function. Since that time, the incinerator has failed its mercury emissions tests. The August 25 public hearing is being held by the state to resolve the violations, and to establish rules of operation.

Q. Will the MDEQ's plan sufficiently protect our community?

A. The MDEQ wants us to think so, but there are major concerns. Their solution to the mercury violations is to weaken the standard for mercury and add a voluntary plan to reduce the amount of mercury coming into the incinerator. They also propose totally eliminating testing for five other toxins, as well as allowing more visible emissions and further testing delays. On the other hand, the MDEQ's proposed plan does add testing for lead, and somewhat strengthens the carbon monoxide standard.

Q. The state plan sound worse than the county's. Maybe we would have been better with the county plan?

A. Even if we could choose, it would be a choice between two bad plans. The old county plan had good standards but lacked any enforcement or testing schedule. This proposed state plan weakens the standards but promises enforcement. Either way, the incinerator wins and the people lose. That's why it is important that we do everything possible to influence the final outcome at the state level. To do that, we need to have a good turn out at the August 25 public hearing.

Q. If the state is proposing to weaken the standards what makes you think they will listen to the public? After all, the county didn't.

A. First of all, the June 1996 county hearing did have an effect. The county didn't listen to us, but our voices were heard at the state and federal level. Also, the state is more accountable than is the county. Finally, with the state we are dealing with tangible issues that can be challenged. For example, the mercury standard they are proposing is 180 times weaker than what is commonly being achieved by the best medical incinerators, and is three times weaker than the test results at this incinerator. The elimination of testing for other toxics is another issue that we can demand be changed. In fact, while reviewing the proposed consent order we have identified 27 specific items that we want changed.

Q. As a person concerned about community health and the operation of the incinerator how can I become better informed?

A.. HEAT has prepared a brief description of the 27 items and will be glad to send a copy for the asking, Anyone interested can call 365-4722 or E-Mail Robc313@aol.com

Q. When and where is the Public Hearing?

AUGUST 25, 1999
HAMTRAMCK HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
11410 CHAREST
7:00 PM

HEAT - Hamtramck Environmental Action Team
1999 Trowbridge - Hamtramck, MI 48212
(313) 365-4722 or robc313@aol.com