



## **City recommends sustainable technology to replace Little Miami Incinerator**

### ***Will ask U.S. EPA for a year-long extension***

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CINCINNATI -- The City of Cincinnati is thinking “environmentally friendly” and “economical” when it comes to disposing of solids from the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati’s Little Miami treatment plant.

Solids (or sludge) generated as part of the wastewater treatment process are currently incinerated at MSD’s Little Miami and Mill Creek plants. But the Little Miami Incinerator is aging and needs to comply with new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency air standards by March 21 or shut down.

The original plan was to decommission the Little Miami Incinerator in March and truck the solids to the Mill Creek plant for incineration. Due to concerns about odors and increased truck traffic at Mill Creek, however, the City decided to explore other options.

“The City needs an alternative to trucking sewage sludge across town and through the Price Hill neighborhoods, which are already overburdened,” said Mayor John Cranley. “We need a technology that not only helps our communities, but benefits the environment and saves money for our residents.”

The options, recently published in a feasibility report prepared by MSD, included refurbishing the existing incinerator, constructing a new facility, hauling sludge to the Mill Creek Incinerator, or treating the sludge and applying it to farmland as fertilizer.

Based on cost, schedule and environmental benefits, the City favors the sustainable option of converting the sludge to a Class A biosolid and applying it to farmland as fertilizer. Class A biosolids have been treated (via anaerobic digestion) to remove pathogens and metals, and consist primarily of the microorganisms used to break down organic matter.

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Another major benefit of the technology is that gases collected during the process (primarily methane) can be used to generate electricity for use at the Little Miami plant.

“This technology is sustainable because it allows the reuse of a waste product and returns essential nutrients and organic matter back to the soil,” said MSD Director Gérald Checco. “We promote sustainability at MSD. Being able to reuse this material as opposed to landfilling or incinerating it makes good environmental, social and economic sense.”

Under this option, MSD will contract with a third party to build and run the facility adjacent to its Little Miami plant. The facility will be fully enclosed and equipped with state-of-the-art technologies to prevent odors. MSD will also sponsor community meetings to inform the public.

The approximate life-cycle costs\* for this technology are about \$65 million, significantly lower than the other options (\$89 million to haul solids to Mill Creek, \$121 million to build a new incinerator and \$127 million to refurbish the existing one).

For about \$71 million, MSD could also opt to have the same third party build and run a facility adjacent to its Muddy Creek plant to avoid trucking solids to the Little Miami plant.

In the interim, MSD is in talks with the U.S. EPA and will request a one-year extension to allow the incinerator to keep operating until March 2017 so MSD has more time to implement a solution.

If the extension is not granted, or the new technology takes more than a year to implement, the sludge will need to be hauled to a third-party facility for treatment or to the Rumpke Landfill.

*(\* The 25-year life cycle costs include design, construction, operation and maintenance.)*

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