



To the Legco Panel on the Environment  
9<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Dear Members, **BBC News Neath (Wales) incinerator forcibly closed**

This is what you get when using outdated polluting mass burn incineration that this Government wishes to use in Shek Kwu Chau rather than modern plasma arc gasification technology with minimal emissions and residues.

Advanced Plasma Power /Tetronics UK who have been in the waste business for 40 years estimate that incineration of 3,000 MSW per day will produce 25-30% ash , more than 800 tonnes of toxic dioxin laden flyash and 200 tonnes of bottom ash per day depending on the MSW content.

Presumably our daft Administration is seeking to treat and dump that ash on the new mega island intended to be constructed at South Cheung Chau ?

Yours sincerely,

*James Middleton*

Chairman

[www.cleartheair.org.hk](http://www.cleartheair.org.hk)

#### **BBC NEWS**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-12073314>

24 December 2010 Last updated at 12:38 GMT

## **Neath waste plant closed over emissions**

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**A waste incinerator has been voluntarily shut down after breaching its limit for emissions.**

Environment Agency Wales said it was taking legal action against the council-owned plant at Crymlyn Burrows in Neath Port Talbot.

Officers said it had failed five out of 10 dioxin emissions tests since the summer although breaches were not at levels to cause health problems. The plant's operators said they were working to address the issue. The plant, which opened in

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2002, processes household waste for recycling and incineration from Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

It is operated by Neath Port Talbot (Recycling) Ltd - a wholly-owned subsidiary of the council. The agency has issued an enforcement notice that will require the operators to take steps by a set date to improve emissions from the site. The incinerator has been voluntarily shut down until mid January as investigations continue.

**"We set the permit limits to protect people"**

End Quote Steve Brown Environment Agency Wales

The agency said Public Health Wales had confirmed the breaches were not at a level to cause health problems to local people. But the agency's area manager Steve Brown said: "This situation has gone on too long.

"Out of the 10 dioxin results received since the summer, **five of these have been over the permitted limit and this is unacceptable.**

"Public Health Wales have reassured us that the levels of these breaches do not pose a risk for local people but are concerned if the situation was to continue.

"We set the permit limits to protect people and the environment and this is why we, as regulators of the site, have escalated our action. "The company have done everything we have asked of them so far, but we will not stop our action until the site is back into compliance with its permit."

Will Watson, a director of Neath Port Talbot (Recycling) Ltd, said: "We took a decision to temporarily close the plant for planned maintenance work two weeks early in light of the recent dioxin results." He said the plant was addressing the failed test results but they had to be put in context. "The level of emissions which we have recorded are still well below the levels which are permitted for other industries by the Environment Agency for dioxin emissions," he added.

**SCMP**

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## Roadside pollution is worse than ever

Time to update 24-year-old air quality objectives, greens say; officials blame weather and old vehicles

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Cheung Chi-fai

*Jan 09, 2012*

Hong Kong's roadside pollution levels were the worst ever last year, according to the Environmental Protection Department.

Readings at the three roadside monitoring stations in Central, Causeway Bay and Mong Kok showed that pollution levels were above the 100 mark more than 20 per cent of the time. This was 10 times worse than in 2005, when very high readings were recorded only 2 per cent of the time.

Exposure to bad air pollution can cause or aggravate respiratory problems or heart disease. Environmentalists renewed their calls for the immediate introduction of new air quality objectives, claiming that the government had deliberately delayed their introduction to ease the way for major infrastructure projects.

The department blamed the figures on unfavourable weather conditions, worsening background pollution and the ageing vehicles on our streets. It said a number of measures were in the pipeline to improve air quality, while the new air quality objectives would be tabled to the legislature as soon as possible.

At the roadside stations, hourly readings are taken throughout the year on major pollutants such as respirable suspended particles and nitrogen oxides. A reading over 100 means at least one pollutant fails the air quality objectives. The station in Central showed the worst figures, with excessive readings a quarter of the time, followed by Causeway Bay at 21 per cent, and Mong Kok at 17 per cent.

The total number of hours with excessive readings was even more than in 2010, when a sandstorm hit the city in March and pushed up the figures. In that year the three stations had an average excess API reading of 17 per cent.

Pollution readings at 11 general stations, which reflect more background and regional pollution, however, remained steady and similar to previous years.

The department said increased nitrogen dioxide levels at the roadside and poor weather conditions were behind the worsening air pollution readings. While other pollutants such as sulphur dioxide have fallen, the department said the nitrogen dioxide level by the roadside has reached the highest since 1999, at 123 micrograms per cubic metre of air.

It said the increase was related to the formation of photochemical smog, which was more active last year because there was 16 per cent more sunshine. The lack of rainfall, down by almost 40 per cent on 2010, was another unfavourable factor as it lessened the removal of pollutants from the air.

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To combat the nitrogen dioxide pollution, a department spokeswoman said, catalytic reduction devices were being tested on older buses, while remote sensing technology would be used to strengthen the control of petrol and LPG vehicles. James Middleton of Clear the Air said people did not need reminders from the department to tell them that air quality was getting worse, and officials were obviously turning a blind eye even at the health risk to themselves and their children.

"The government servants working for the EPD have children too - they share the filth in our air. The deliberate prevarication obviously comes from the very top," Middleton said. "This is a complete disrespect and disregard of the duty of care the administration owes to the health of the people of Hong Kong." Middleton said he suspected the government's failure to update air quality objectives enacted 24 years ago was deliberate so that infrastructure projects such as a third airport runway and waste incinerator could pass environmental impact studies.

In a separate set of monitoring results, on the concentration of fine particles, those with a diameter of less than 2.5 microns, the annual average roadside reading at both Central and Mong Kok marginally failed the proposed new air quality standard of 35 micrograms. (Note: WHO Objectives are 10 micrograms and USA EPA 15 micrograms per m<sup>3</sup>)

The department has not published the data, but the figures were obtained recently by Clear the Air. Fine particles are not a statutory air pollutant at present. Scientists say these particles can infiltrate the blood vessels and lungs, causing more damage than larger particles.

The department said the average concentration of fine particles at monitored locations had declined by more than a quarter over the past five years. It also said at least 60 per cent of the fine particles were generated across the border.

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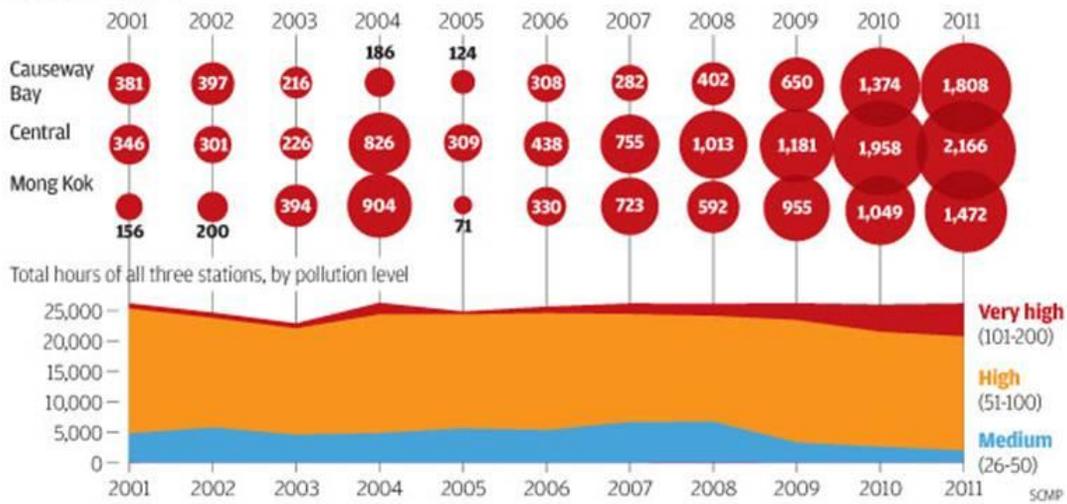
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### No breathing easy

Roadside air pollution over the last 10 years: the number of hours the index recorded very high readings at Causeway Bay, Central and Mong Kok



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### Some Incinerator News

Nov. 1 -- The waste incinerator in **Harrisburg, Pa.**, has burned through more than just garbage over the past four decades. It's burned through money, the patience of residents and now the city's solvency.

Earlier this month, Harrisburg became the first state capital in memory -- perhaps in history -- to declare bankruptcy, thanks to the \$310 million debt that hangs over the Harrisburg Resource Recovery Facility.

The incinerator has been a money pit in Harrisburg since it was built in 1972, with the biggest chunk of investment coming when the **city spent \$125 million to rebuild the facility in 2003.**

Finally, on Oct. 12, with \$65 million of its debt due, the City Council **voted to declare Chapter 9 bankruptcy instead of adopting a recovery plan developed by the state and Mayor Linda Thompson.**"

<http://www.wasterecyclingnews.com/email.html?id=1320157480>

"The City of **Copenhagen** has denied the over \$700 million loan needed to advance a trash-incinerator-cum-ski-slope proposed last year. It turns out that this spectacular scheme to redesign the Amagerforbrænding incinerator would ultimately increase the plant's carbon dioxide emissions by as much as 30 percent annually and also fix the waste treatment plant in place for at least another 30 years. The smoke-ring-blowing recreational monument emphasized the hedonism of Danish architect Bjarke Ingels's "hedonistic sustainability" mantra perhaps a little too much, lest we forget the sustainable part. While the incinerator is still much in need of renovation, the city has opted to push the project back and focus instead on implementing better ways for citizens to recycle materials and prevent the generation of a literal mountain of trash instead of glorifying it (with an entourage of bikini-sporting skiers no less)."

<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/design/2011/12/copenhagens-trash-incinerator-ski-slope-denied-loan/668/>

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In 2006, waste contractor SITA signed a 30-year-contract with the then **Cornwall** County Council to handle waste. They came up with plans for an incinerator at St Dennis in mid-Cornwall, but in 2009 councillors rejected the bid. SITA appealed against the decision which led to a public inquiry.

Secretary of State Eric Pickles later granted planning approval, which was challenged by protesters in the High Court. In November, Mr Justice Collins ruled **the environmental impact of the £117m plant had not been properly considered**. Mr Pickles has now lodged an appeal against that decision at the Court of Appeal, but it could be several months before a decision is made. Opponents of the incinerator have argued the **plant would be too big, in the wrong place and could cause health and conservation issues.**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-16174322>

Wheelabrator Technologies Inc., the operator of three municipal waste incinerators in **Massachusetts**, has agreed to pay US\$7.5 million to settle a state lawsuit alleging that it broke environmental laws, more than a year and a half after the complaints of employee whistleblowers triggered a state investigation of the incinerators.

In a statement released by her office yesterday, Attorney General Martha Coakley said that Wheelabrator violated the Clean Water Act and the Wetlands Protection Act by improperly disposing of contaminated sludge and waste water at its plants in Millbury and Saugus and that it violated the Hazardous Waste Management Act **by improperly treating and disposing of ash at its plants in Saugus and North Andover.**

[http://articles.boston.com/2011-05-03/news/29500049\\_1\\_whistle-blower-law-incinerators-whistleblowers](http://articles.boston.com/2011-05-03/news/29500049_1_whistle-blower-law-incinerators-whistleblowers)

For the last 20 years, the **Detroit** Incinerator, also know as the Greater Detroit Resource Recovery Facility, has cost the city an estimated 1.2 billion dollars, and continues to increase air pollution levels throughout the city. These pollution levels persistently exceed National Ambient Air Quality standards, and consequently contribute to the rising rates of asthma. Detroiters are three times as likely to be hospitalized for asthma compared to Michigan as a whole, and asthma death rates in Detroit are two times that for the state. As the largest incinerator in the world, it is grossly over sized and imports garbage from nearby towns just so it can operate at design capacity. During the past several years of the City's bond obligation for the incinerator, private haulers were charged as little as \$13 per ton, while Detroit residents effectively paid \$150 per ton or more. Since the Facility needed the trash to keep it burning, its served as a disincentive to recycling.

<http://www.greatmichigan.org/additional-priorities/air/detroit-incinerator>

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Detroit City Council left critics of the city's contentious trash incinerator puzzled and angry Tuesday, when the body voted to approve a hefty tax credit for the facility's operator.

Detroit Renewable Power had lost an earlier bid for \$4.1 million in brownfield development credits this April, when the Council denied its request, the *Metro Times* reports.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/23/detroit-incinerator-wins-brownfield-tax-credits\\_n\\_1110823.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/23/detroit-incinerator-wins-brownfield-tax-credits_n_1110823.html)

The waste management giant behind the controversial Poolbeg incinerator plant has been fined thousands of dollars and cited for emissions violations at a number of its US operations. An Irish Independent investigation uncovered details of the fines imposed on **Covanta Energy**.

The New Jersey-based company is the parent of the main shareholder at Dublin Waste to Energy, Covanta Energy Ireland which will operate the **€350 million Poolbeg facility**, and has paid a series of fines and settlements in the US in recent years.

The size and cost of the plant has already caused controversy — as has the *structure of the contract with Covanta Energy, its private partner, Danish firm Dong Energy, and Dublin City Council*.

Now it has emerged that Covanta Energy was forced to pay \$355,000 (€250,957) into a special fund in November as part of a settlement with the US Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This was paid after the company was found to have exceeded permitted limits for dioxin emissions at a facility in Wallingford, Connecticut. And Covanta Energy was also hit with a fine of \$45,600 (€32,230) in October 2008 for excessive emissions in Pennsylvania.

In August of the same year, it was penalised \$14,025 (€9,912) for causing air pollution in New Jersey. And another investigation by the DEP found that the company had exceeded the allowable emissions for dioxins by almost 350pc at a plant in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

The company was also fined \$7,653 (€5,409) for failing to report other air quality violations at the Pittsfield plant between January and March of 2008.

<http://tara-foundation.org/blog/?p=909>

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A report today from Wallingford in New Jersey USA states that Covanta has been ordered to pay a \$400,000 fine and been forced to upgrade one of its incinerators due to an emissions violation last summer. You can read the original story [here](#).

**Disturbingly the plant was forced to close in July 2010 and still remains closed one year on**, forcing the operator to truck it's waste to other plants for incineration.

<http://www.anti-incinerator.org.uk/2011/07/covanta-fined-again-in-the-usa-for-doixin-emissions/>

So toxic dioxin laden flyash has a mind of its own !



<http://ukwin.org.uk/resources/health/dioxins-and-other-harmful-incinerator-emissions/>

Dioxins and other harmful incinerator emissions

.The information below is adapted from: Dearden, J. C., Proof of Evidence submitted on behalf of Residents Against Incineration (RAIN) regarding proposals at Ince Marshes, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire (2008)

Dioxins are a family of 75 polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (PCDDs). This compound is one of the most toxic chemicals known, and is a known human carcinogen and endocrine disruptor. Similar chemicals are polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDFs), of which there are 135. Other related compounds are polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), of which there are 209, many of which are known [Mukerjee 1998] to be endocrine disrupters. Yet others are polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), of which there are 209, and polybrominated biphenyls (PBBs) of which there are also 209. PBDEs and PBBs are used as flame-retardants for electrical goods, clothing and furniture. They are known to be endocrine disruptors and to cause developmental neurobehavioural defects [Mikula & Svobodová 2006, Eriksson et al 2006]. **The principal cause of their presence in the environment is widely accepted to be incineration** [D'Silva et al 2004].



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