

Don't let Covanta burn industrial waste in Camden!

What is Covanta?

Covanta Camden is the largest industrial air polluter in all of Camden County. It's a trash incinerator located at the south end of Waterfront South. They burn up to 1,050 tons of trash a day from throughout Camden County, plus waste from Pennsylvania and several other NJ counties. They're the second largest source of toxic lead emissions in the entire U.S. trash incineration industry. Pollutants released from Covanta contribute to asthma attacks, cancers, heart attacks, COPD, stroke, learning disabilities, and much more.



Do we need Covanta?

No. Trash incineration is the most expensive and polluting way to manage waste. It turns trash into toxic air pollution and toxic ash. Every day, about 200 tons of Covanta's ash are trucked to dump in a landfill in rural Gloucester County. Incineration is dirtier than burning coal and is more harmful than putting trash directly in landfills without burning it first.

The Covanta Camden has been around since early 1991. At 31 years old, it's in its last decade of life and is at economic risk of closing. Of the 48 incinerators that closed in the U.S. since 2000, their average age at closure was just 24. This dirty technology is deeply unpopular, and no one is building new incinerators in the U.S. It's time for Covanta to go.

What is this scheme you're talking about?

In mid-2020, plans were released to build a "microgrid" that would keep the lights on at the CCMUA sewage treatment plant if the power goes out. It would have been powered by Covanta, in a deal that would have made Covanta profitable by enabling them to triple their electric sales revenue.

VICTORY! Camden for Clean Air organized and spoke out. Within ten months, it was announced that the microgrid would be powered by solar, digester gas, and batteries instead of propping up Covanta's dirty incinerator!

Covanta's new scheme to import and burn liquid industrial wastes

pays much better than burning trash. It means more tanker trucks in the neighborhood, and more burning of toxic chemicals. Covanta claims that burning liquid industrial waste means less trash burning and no extra trucks or pollution, but they have plenty of unused capacity and can take the additional 25,000 tons per year of liquid waste and still only be operating at 90% capacity.



Promises, promises...

The incinerator is missing a major pollution control system. They have no baghouse filter to reduce the emissions of particulate matter (soot) that is spewed into the community. They report releasing around 25 tons of soot into the air per year, more than any industrial facility in the county. This contributes to heart attacks, strokes, asthma, and other breathing difficulties. Even with a baghouse, Covanta will still be the county's #1 air polluter.

When the microgrid was proposed in 2020, Covanta claimed they needed it to afford the baghouse filters. However, they also stated in writing that they're committed to installing the missing filters whether they get the microgrid deal or not, and that it's a corporate priority to install them by 2023. It'll take at about five years to permit and install them. Covanta's holding the community hostage with this promise, once again saying they'll install the baghouse only if they get to burn liquid industrial wastes.

The best deal is no deal

Covanta is proposing a "community benefits agreement," throwing some bones to community groups in exchange for support they need to obtain a state permit to make more money and pollution. **Tell Camden County Commissioners NOT to keep steering the county's trash to Covanta or any incinerator.**

Speak up and be counted! Visit CamdenForCleanAir.org for more info and to fill out the survey on where you stand on Covanta's plan.

