

Waste plant triggers public protests

by Bindu Shajan Perappadan
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NEW DELHI: Residents staying close to the Delhi Government's proposed waste-to-energy project at the Okhla sanitary landfill site have intensified their protest against the project and demanded that it be moved away from the residential area.

"We are not against the project as such and understand the need for more waste-to-energy plants, but what we are against is the fact that the plant is being set up in a residential area and has potentially dangerous implications for the health of the residents. We will not allow the plant to get started here," said Sukhdev Vihar Residents Welfare Association member Anil Mishra.

"The residents organised a protest on Monday when the plant was being handed over to Jindal Urban Infrastructure Ltd. We got together to express our anguish against the company and the Delhi Government for ignoring grave public health concerns emanating from the toxic plant," he added.

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Delhi Campaign for Safe Environment convener Gopal Krishna said: "The residents are extremely angry and upset about the ill-conceived planning by the government authorities. They fear that the proposed plant will be using large quantities of municipal solid waste containing plastic material and would surely affect the health of residents living close to the proposed site."

Alarming prospect

Stating that the residents of Sukhdev Vihar and Hazi Colony are alarmed at the prospect of this incinerator plant coming up so close to their homes, he said: "Dioxins travel long distances in the atmosphere and are found on plants, in water, soil, grazing animals and humans. The plant is located inside dozens of densely populated residential colonies. The government follows the policy of shifting out and relocating all existing industries, then why is it setting up a plant in this residential area?"

According to a release issued by the Delhi Campaign for Safe Environment, the proposed Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) combustion technology that is to be used in the plant for electricity generation had failed in Timarpur, Delhi, in 1990. Similar plants have failed in Andhra Pradesh, too.

"Polluting technology"

“The Delhi Waste Master Plan refers to it as a polluting technology that is adopted in countries whose environmental standards are lax. The use of RDF implies burning of mixed waste including plastics and paper to gain calorific value (up to 3000 kcal) of what is otherwise a low-energy mix. Also, as per the Municipal Waste Handling and Management Rules, the combustion of PVC plastics is banned,” said Mr. Krishna.

source: www.hindu.com

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