

# Meghan Kosowski

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Any plan for the management of waste and pollution in the future, either short or long-term, has to include radical reductions in consumption and waste. For the Twin Cities to be in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, we must set a goal of at least 50% waste reduction by 2030 and 75% or higher waste reduction by 2042 (as compared to current total waste generated), as well as a waste diversion goal of 90% by 2042.

This is what it's going to take to avoid total environmental disaster and the cascading failure of ecosystems. That means US.

The Plan put forth by MPCA calls for a measly, wholly-insufficient reduction of 5% over 20 years. If this is the best we have, we are all going to succumb to the worst effects of climate catastrophe.

The plan names "reduction" as the highest priority, yet provides \*no policy suggestions\* on how we approach reduction. Lip service will not save us. We need leadership that enacts policies that actively address and reverse the damages of pollution, especially because the toxic air that comes from incineration impacts frontline communities the hardest, making this an issue of environmental justice. This is both a practical and conceptual set of problems that need to be solved aggressively and quickly.

Most egregiously, the Plan still advocates for incineration, which effectively propagates the mistakes that got us all in this fatal predicament to begin with. While MPCA is wasting time proposing less-than-helpful Plans like this one, real human people and other living things are suffering as a result of hyper-consumption and the burning of trash that results from it.

It seems like the MPCA does not take those concerns seriously, and does not acknowledge the harm that toxins from the incinerator have been proven to cause. Dangerous material comes out of the HERC incinerator, because it's a terribly dirty and unsound way of dealing with excess waste! Materials that poison people in nearby communities include infamous hazards like lead, Sulfur Dioxide, PFAS, arsenic, and a host of other compounds for which there is no safe level of exposure! Anyone who lives near the incinerator is chronically exposed to these emissions. Saying that emissions "meet EPA standards" does not mean they are not killing people. The reason for burning trash is not that there are no other options -- we have safer solutions to dealing with waste. We simply need the political will to enact those changes to save the lives of our neighbors. It may seem like the people who this impacts now are expendable or not worthy of consideration, but guess what? On a very tight timeline into the future this will be ALL of us and throwing frontline communities under the bus so that we can lie to ourselves that we're solving a problem will be the death of all of us. Stop making frontline communities a means to an end, and protect the vulnerable.