

## Stephani Booker

The MPCA Solid Waste Management Plan is not a management plan at all without comprehensive, systemic zero-waste goals and actions that will reduce waste going to trash burners and landfills by 50 percent by 2030 with a goal of 90 percent by 2042 as the United Nations recommends.

Unfortunately, as long as the trash burner is operating, achieving these goals will not be possible because state law says that the incinerator must always be run as long as it exists. It's a monster that must be fed. See my attachment for my full commentary.

My wife and I live in North Minneapolis, a mile and a half away from the Hennepin County trash burner. Contrary to the stereotypes many have about African American working-class Northside residents like me, I am a lifelong urban environmentalist and zero-waster. I'm also one of the community members who participated in Hennepin County's Zero Waste Plan process.

The MPCA Solid Waste Management Plan is not a management plan at all without comprehensive, systemic zero-waste goals and actions that will reduce waste going to trash burners and landfills by 50 percent by 2030 with a goal of 90 percent by 2042 as the United Nations recommends. Unfortunately, as long as the trash burner is operating, achieving these goals will not be possible because state law says that the incinerator must always be run as long as it exists.

Unlike landfills, the Hennepin County trash burner produces pollution that cannot be "cleaned up"; once the lead, mercury, CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> leaves the smokestacks, it's all in the air and on the way to being breathed by the environmentally overburdened community of North Minneapolis an area with concentrated poverty and populated predominantly with African Americans and other People of Color and Indigenous residents.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has named the Hennepin County trash burner as an air pollution source, and the idea that trash burning is "better" than landfills is a fallacy that has no scientific backing. Simply asserting this idea doesn't make it true, and the MPCA plan has no studies or evidence proving incineration is less harmful to the environment or people than landfills.

Meanwhile, North Minneapolis area code 55411 has the highest asthma hospitalization rate in the state according to the Minnesota Department of Health. Continuing to burn trash upwind of my neighborhood while ignoring all the signs of harm my community is suffering from it is the continuation of environmental racism and classism inflicted upon North Minneapolis for decades.

A true waste management plan for our metro area starts with shutting down the monster in my city that must be continuously fed by state law, the Hennepin County trash burner. It then continues by taking the money that would go into the incineration's operation and put it into implementing a zero-waste plan that is comprehensive, systemic and, most importantly, accessible. Currently, in order to properly dispose of household batteries, I have to make a 25-mile round trip to one of the county solid waste transfer stations. It's hard for me to believe very many people are doing the same, and many of my neighbors in North Minneapolis can't do that because they don't own cars—again, this is an area of concentrated poverty.

Burning trash next to a historically marginalized community, in the middle of a climate change crisis, with no real actions to change our waste management system to achieve the zero-waste goals we all need to save us from the waste crisis — the price for this travesty is already being paid for with the lives and lungs of North Minneapolis residents like me and my neighbors of various ages, races, incomes and abilities.