

General information

Public comment period begins: May 18, 2026
Public comment period ends: June 17, 2026
Current permit issued: September 18, 2018
Current permit expiration date: August 30, 2023

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Commissioner has made a preliminary determination to reissue this permit for a term of approximately five years.

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name and address of Permittee: | Facility name and location: | MPCA contact person: |
| Hennepin County 701 4th Ave S Ste 700 Minneapolis, MN 55415-1842 | Hennepin Energy Recovery Center 505 6th Ave N Minneapolis, MN 55405-1503 Hennepin County T29N, R24W, Section 22 | Sarah Starr Industrial Division Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 520 Lafayette Road N Saint Paul, MN 55155-4194 Phone: 651-757-2335 Email: sarah.starr@state.mn.us |
| GRE HERC Services, LLC 12300 Elm Creek Blvd. MS220 Maple Grove, MN 55401 | | |

File manager phone: 651-757-2728 or
844-828-0942

A draft permit is available for review on the MPCA Public Notices webpage at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/get-engaged/public-comments>. Additional materials relating to the issuance of this permit are available for inspection by appointment at any MPCA office (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mPCA/contact-us>) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The MPCA will mail or email a copy of the draft permit upon request. Comments, petitions, and other requests must be received at the MPCA in writing on or before the public comment period end date and U.S. Mail comments must be received by 4:30 p.m.

Watershed: Mississippi River - Twin Cities

Receiving water: Mississippi River - Class 1C, 2Bdg, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 6 water

Description of permitted facility

The facility is an energy-from-waste facility that operates two mass burn waterwall Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) combustion units, each capable of processing 606 tons per day (TPD) of MSW. The mass burn technology and waste to energy boiler grates allow for the immediate processing of MSW with no presorting of materials required. After weighing, solid waste collection and transfer vehicles enter the tipping area to discharge their load onto the tipping floor or directly into the 7,000-ton storage bunker. Unacceptable or non-processible wastes such as tires, appliances, and items too large for the feed chutes are placed in roll-off containers for recycling or alternate disposal.

One of two overhead cranes lifts the waste from the storage pit into the feed chute leading to the furnace. The crane operator mixes the MSW to provide a uniform fuel mixture. Dust and odors within the storage bunker and tipping hall area are controlled by drawing in combustion air from these areas into the boilers and utilizing automatic high-speed entrance and exit doors to keep the areas under a slight negative pressure.

Solid waste drops through feed chutes and is moved onto furnace grates by hydraulically operated ram feeders. The MSW moves down through the feed chute onto the horizontal movable grates of the boiler. The high chrome/nickel, cast steel alloy grate bars transport the waste through a drying zone, an ignition zone, a combustion zone, and into a post-combustion zone.

A forced draft fan supplies the primary combustion air underneath the grate. In addition, secondary air is injected through the front and rear walls of the furnace to complete combustion and control emissions.

Inside the steel tubes that form the furnace walls of the boiler, water is converted to steam from the heat transfer of the combustion process. The steam is superheated and directed to an extracting, condensing turbine-generator to produce electricity. The electricity produced flows to switchgear and on to an electrical transmission line interconnected to the Xcel Energy distribution system. The facility is designed to process 365,000 tons/year of mixed solid waste, which generates up to 337,000 megawatt hours/year.

Municipal water is used as cooling tower makeup water, hydrostatic test water, quench tank reuse to cooling towers, air compressor cooling water, boiler/steam generation (following pretreatment through a demineralization system), domestic consumption, fire protection, lawn sprinkling, and other miscellaneous uses.

The waste stream authorized for discharge by this permit consists of cooling tower blowdown. In this non-contact cooling process, water may be recycled approximately seven times prior to blowdown. Water used as air compressor cooling and in the condensate polisher may be reused as cooling tower makeup water. Cooling tower blowdown may be recycled for use in the quench tank. When reused as such, the resultant waste stream is discharged to the sanitary sewer.

Chemicals are added to the cooling tower for the control of scale, corrosion and microbiological activities.

Cooling tower blowdown, as a point source discharge, is discharged to the municipal storm sewer at an average rate of 75,000 gallons per day (gpd) and a permitted maximum rate of 300,000 gpd via SD 001.

This segment of the city of Minneapolis storm sewer connects to the Bassett Creek Conduit which previously discharged into the Mississippi River approximately 300 yards downstream of River Mile 855, and the Plymouth Avenue Bridge. Due to construction, Bassett Creek outfall was relocated approximately 300 yards downstream of River Mile 854 between Upper St. Anthony Falls and Lower St. Anthony Falls. The location of the facility discharge to the storm sewer did not change, but it is now referred to as Old Bassett Creek Tunnel or outfall. A berm restricts flow to the old tunnel, but per an agreement between Minneapolis, the watershed district, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE), during high flow events (50 cubic feet per second (cfs)), flows may be directed from the new tunnel to the old tunnel.

Industrial stormwater management and control requirements have been included in this permit. All discharge conveyances have been evaluated at the site and it has been determined that no liquids other than stormwater and the permitted cooling tower blowdown are being discharged from these devices. There are no direct discharges to the storm sewer except for the cooling tower blowdown. All significant materials have been contained and any areas that are exposed to stormwater have been contained. Stormwater collected from these areas is routed to the wastewater basin and reused at the facility. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are implemented and are included in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

The preliminary determination to reissue this wastewater permit is tentative.

Procedure for public participation

As stated in Minn. R. chs. 7000 and 7001, there are three formal procedures for public participation in the MPCA's consideration of this matter. Interested persons may:

- 1) Submit written comments on the draft permit.
- 2) Petition the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting.
- 3) Petition the MPCA to hold a contested case hearing.

Submitting written comments

Comments may be submitted:

- 1) Online at <https://mpca.commentinput.com/comment/search>; or
- 2) By U.S. postal mail to the following address:

Sarah Starr
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road N
Saint Paul, MN 55155-4194

Submitted comments or petitions must state:

- 1) Your interest in the permit application or the draft permit.
- 2) The action you wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to the section of the draft permit you believe should be changed.
- 3) The reasons supporting your position, stated with sufficient specificity as to allow the MPCA to investigate the merits of the position.

Public informational meeting

A public informational meeting is an informal meeting during which interested persons can ask questions concerning the proposed facility. MPCA staff will be present to provide information. If an interested person would like the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting, the person should include all information identified above and in addition include a statement of the reasons the person desires the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting and the issues that the person would like the agency to address at the public informational meeting.

Contested Case Hearing

A contested case hearing is a formal proceeding before an administrative law judge empowered to advise the MPCA regarding issues of fact. As described in Minn. R. 7000.1800, persons who submit petitions for a contested case hearing must also state the issues they propose to address in a contested case hearing, the specific relief requested or resolution of the matter, and the reasons (which may be in the form of proposed findings) supporting an MPCA decision to hold a contested case hearing. Failure to comply with these rules exactly may result in a denial of the request. To the extent known, the petitioner may also submit a list of prospective witnesses to be called at a hearing, a proposed list of publications, references, or studies to be introduced at a hearing and the approximate time required for the petitioner to present the matter at a hearing. The decision whether to hold a contested case hearing will be made under Minn. R. 7000.1900.