

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

March 18, 2002

Dear YCUA Customers,

There has been much information in the media and misinformation distributed recently concerning the YCUA decision to **REPLACE** our current incinerator. For over 20 years, incineration has been the method used at the Authority to dispose of the wastewater sludge (material produced in our treatment process) once it has been treated at the wastewater treatment plant. The **NEW** incinerator you have been hearing about is actually a **REPLACEMENT** incinerator. As with all technology over the past 20 years, the technology of incineration has improved dramatically since our first incinerator was installed.

Regarding the decision to treat WTUA (Plymouth, Canton, and Northville Townships) wastewater, the original contract was signed in 1988. The YCUA Board in office at that time made the decision in an effort to increase efficiencies in the wastewater treatment plant. The current YCUA Board is obligated to adhere to this legally binding contract. As the Director of the Authority, I believe this agreement has been very beneficial and continues to be in the best interest of the community and all our residents.

In an effort to maintain our commitment to you, our residents, as well as to our employees, health, safety and environmental factors were our primary consideration when evaluating plans to replace the aging incinerator.

Enclosed with this letter you find the facts we used to reach the decision that incineration is the most healthful, efficient, and environmentally friendly method to dispose of the treated wastewater material. Additionally, be assured that neither toxic wastes or municipal garbage are incinerated at YCUA, nor will they be with the **REPLACEMENT** incinerator.

The Board of Directors, employees, and I remain dedicated to providing our customers and residents with the best possible water and wastewater treatment services. We are steadfast in our commitment to do so in a manner that protects our community, residents, and environment from hazards. In fact, our decision to **REPLACE** the old incinerator with new technology provides improvements in air quality and emissions.

I am always happy to answer any question or concerns you may have. Please feel free to call me at (734) 484-4600 or visit our website at www.ycua.org.

LARRY R. THOMAS, Director
Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority

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Facts Related to the REPLACEMENT Incinerator at YCUA

History

- Original incinerator was erected to dispose of material resulting from wastewater treatment in 1982.
- The YCUA Board of Directors, with approval from the Ypsilanti Township Board of Trustees and the Ypsilanti City Council, in office in 1988, entered into an agreement with WTUA (Canton, Northville, and Plymouth Townships) to treat its wastewater.
- Benefits to Ypsilanti residents of this agreement include: creating economies of scale to keep sewage treatment costs low; funding of the plant expansion is covered largely by WTUA.
- A team of over 20 professionals, including independent consultants, engineers, YCUA employees, and WTUA representatives spent almost a year evaluating the options available to replace the current incinerator. The research indicated that fluidized bed incineration would best serve the local YCUA communities.

Benefits of Incineration with the REPLACEMENT Incinerator

- Significant improvement to air quality over the current method of incineration. Emissions will be reduced by 90% over current emissions, even when the plant is operating at full capacity after the expansion.
- Staff exposure to raw waste and risk of exposure to airborne dust or pathogens are minimized.
- Offers the most control over costs in the future.
- In addition to meeting EPA air quality standards and regulations, the **REPLACEMENT** incinerator will contain additional pollution control devices that will allow it to **EXCEED** the environmental standards required by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- In discussions with the Air Quality Division of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, they agree that this technology is sound and clean.

Downside to Incineration

- The team recognized that there was potential for public concern over the term “incineration.” However, because this is a **REPLACEMENT** of an already existing, aging incinerator, it is believed that based on the facts, the public would also find this to be the best overall method of disposal of wastewater biosolids.

Downside to Reusing the Waste Material

- After extensive research, it was found that there is no established market in Michigan for biosolid waste compost, so selling it or even giving it away are not viable options.
- Transportation of the volume of material coming from the plant would cause unnecessary emissions to be released into the air from truck exhaust. Incineration greatly reduces the need for transportation and would create less overall emissions.
- There are increased health and safety risks to the public and to our employees due to exposure to dust, ammonia gas, and pathogens. Disposing of the waste material into landfills or injecting it into the ground are not acceptable based on YCUA’s commitment to operating in an environmentally friendly manner.