



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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DEM DENIES PERMIT APPLICATION OF PROPOSED MEDICAL WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) announced today that it has denied the permit application of Medrecycler-RI Inc. to build a medical waste-to-energy plant at 1600 Division Road in West Warwick. DEM cited the following factors in denying the application:

- The proposal did not include adequate details about testing protocols, necessary for public review, as part of the permit review process for a medical waste treatment plant.
- The proposal's contingency and response plans – what happens in the event of an emergency? – are incomplete. Many of the 400+ members of the public who commented during the application's comment period cited concerns about the proposal's lack of strong environmental monitoring and safety plans. DEM shares these concerns.
- Related, DEM found the proposal's lack of clarity about how much and where medical waste would be safely stored to be a critical deficiency in the application. This impacts the proposed operation, monitoring requirements, contingency planning, and closure assurances.
- The facility is proposed in a densely populated area close to residential neighborhoods, making the public review of the contingency plans and testing protocols even more relevant. There is no buffer between the proposed facility and other tenants located at that address and little buffer between the facility and surrounding community.
- Uncertainty over the impacts of the proposed facility's innovative technology. This proposed system has not previously been used on medical waste.

Also influential in DEM's decision was the enactment of a law prohibiting new high-heat medical waste processing facilities from being sited in Rhode Island. Governor Dan McKee signed the bill into law July 9. "The Department believes that regardless of the deficiencies in the application outlined above, this law would prohibit the Department from issuing or granting a permit or license for this proposed facility," DEM wrote in its denial.

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