

RCAP 8-18-08 Recommendations

RCAP endorses the preferred option put forth by the Saint Paul Port Authority to offset the combustion of natural gas with the production of biogas derived from anaerobic digestion. (CONSENSUS)

In the event that the preferred recommendation is not successful, RCAP endorses alternative #1 with the assurance that the fuel used by the turbine will be exclusively natural gas (or biogas). (CONSENSUS)

RCAP cannot give unqualified support to Alternative #2 due to the lack of sufficient information on environmental performance and economics. Of the solid-fuel combustion options gasification has the potential to be the most benign. However, if this alternative is explored, RCAP recommends that it be reconvened to vet the economic and environmental details. (CONSENSUS)

RCAP recommends that Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) combustion be removed from future consideration as a fuel source for Rock-Tenn. (CONSENSUS)

Minnesota statutes treat RDF as a renewable energy source, and RDF is accordingly an eligible fuel for the proposed power plant. As a practical matter, the Panel does not view RDF as renewable. A large fraction of the energy available from thermal conversion of this material comes from plastic, which is currently derived almost completely from fossil fuels. (Previous Consensus Item)

RCAP recommends the continued pursuit of energy conservation. It will produce the greatest savings and most positive environmental and health impact. (CONSENSUS)

RCAP encourages Rock-Tenn and partners to distribute to other users any surplus low-grade energy that may be available as a result of continued conservation efforts. (CONSENSUS)

Process heat reuse and recycling can reduce total energy demands at Rock Tenn by at least 20%, while providing a large amount of surplus low-temperature heat for sale to and use in the surrounding area. Reduced demand, plus surplus energy sales will contribute to lowering Rock Tenn's overall energy costs. (Previous Consensus Item)

Qualifiers

- Environmental safeguards appropriate to assure that any biogas facility (anaerobic digesters) manufacturing biogas for Rock-Tenn meet the highest health and environmental standards achievable in the community where the facility is located (CONSENSUS)
- RCAP has not reviewed the data about the potential environmental impacts of any anaerobic digestion facilities. The endorsement of any of the proposals should not be seen to imply that we have reviewed the environmental impacts of biogas production. (CONSENSUS)

- The development of each option must include a process for gathering local input, participation and support. (CONSENSUS)
- RCAP, in its approval, assumes that on-site use of fuel oil will be minimized. (CONSENSUS)
- In principle, the panel believes there should be equal duration of public commitment and the commitment of Rock-Tenn. (CONSENSUS)

Additional Findings

RCAP supports implementation of comprehensive zero waste strategies for the city of Saint Paul. (CONSENSUS)

Solar, wind and metropolitan area biogas production are all endorsed for inclusion in meeting Rock-Tenn's energy needs because of environmental and health benefits, if it can add value to the economics of the future Rock-Tenn facility. (CONSENSUS)