



Re Covanta Incident 15/04/21

1 message

BACI Beds Against Covanta Incinerator <bedsagainstcovantaincinerator@gmail.com> Sun, Apr 18, 2021 at 1:17 PM

Reply-To: bedsagainstcovantaincinerator@gmail.com

To: [REDACTED]@environment-agency.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Dear Emma

I tried to speak with you on Friday regarding the incident that occurred on Thursday 15/04/21. Louise Greenwood took my call and had some details about the incident that she described as involving the heating of the new cladding on boiler line 2.

I understand from Louise that you came out to the incident and was able to record an 'acrid smell'.

I understand from Louise that you were unable to ascertain the content of the emission and therefore we have no data regarding its impact on human health and the environment.

We are in receipt of the letter from HZI dated 08/03/21 regarding what residents should expect from the Commissioning stage.

We are also in receipt of the statement from HZI following the incident.

I have been reminded by Louise that the permit issued by the EA does not require Covanta - or those working on their behalf - to keep the community informed of anything.

However - I would like to point out that despite HZI saying on their recent statement that "Hot commissioning can create initial short-term odours for approximately one day when each of the three boiler lines are firstly heated up as part of the process to clean them" - they failed to mention this on their first communication on 08/03/21.

I would further point out that HZI choose to tell residents that the stack would only be discharging water vapour. "This may result in a plume of water vapour being visible from the main chimney stack".

We have been sent photos of the discharge on Thursday which was clearly brown in colour and clearly not just 'water vapour'.

We have had many communications over the past few days from residents that experienced adverse effects as a result of the incident.

Based on HZI's short track record of lack of disclosure and transparency of operation - we have absolutely no faith in their assertion from their after the event statement that the odour/discharges "...are short-term and are not harmful to people or the environment."

We note from the recent HZI communication that the next line/chimney to be tested/cleaned will take place on Tuesday 20/04/21.

I am advised by Louise that your investigation into the incident on Thursday could take until the end of the week - which is after the proposed date of the next occasion by HZI.

Now that you are aware of this problem you can not allow residents to be subjected to the same experience as Thursday just to satisfy HZI's timetable.

In order to execute your responsibilities as the 'Expert Regulator' of this development you must take immediate action.

You either need to prioritise your investigation so that it is concluded (with a positive outcome) before Tuesday - or you need to tell your operator to delay the test/clean until your investigation is complete.

As far as the content of the investigation is concerned we feel that the more information that is shared with the residents the better in this case.

We would expect the residents to be party to the Data Sheets mentioned by Louise in our conversation which we presume will note the composition of the cladding, confirmation of the processes used to incorporate the cladding into the facility, confirmation of the processes to prepare the cladding for testing/cleaning and confirmation of the temperatures and durations involved in the processes that occurred on Thursday.

We would also expect an appropriate EA representative to be present at the next test/clean with appropriate equipment to record any discharges.

In HZI's recent statement it stated "As part of our commissioning responsibilities, we have proactively made the local planning authority and the Environment Agency aware of these activities" - so we were surprised to hear that you were not prepared with some knowledge of the type of discharge likely to be occurring during this test/clean - and the appropriate equipment to record its composition during the incident on Thursday.

Residents are very rightly concerned about what the future holds for them and their families given we are literally 2 weeks into the 35+ years operating life span of this facility.

Your intervention in this matter is crucial and opportunity for the EA to show its position as regulator of the development and prove that its concern is for the health of the residents and the environment and not the operators timetable.

Please give this your immediate attention.

Kind regards
Nicola Ryan-Raine
Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator (BACI)

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