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# **NEW LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP FORMED TO FIGHT MASSIVE TIRE INCINERATOR PLANT PLANNED FOR ERIE**

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A new grassroots environmental group has formed in Erie dedicated to stopping the construction of a massive tire burning incinerator in the Erie community. This network concerned citizens and environmental activists has named itself KEEP (Keep Erie's Environment Protected)

In March of this year Erie Renewable Energy, LLC. held a public meeting to unveil their plans to construct a waste tire to energy facility on a portion of the now vacant International Paper Hammermill property. This facility if constructed would incinerate 800 tons of waste tires a day to generate electricity in a residential urban setting. It would be the largest such facility in the United States surpassing a similar tire derived fuel (TDF) facility in Sterling, Connecticut which is one half its size. The plan has met with vocal opposition from the concerned citizens, local college and university faculty, and the Erie environmental community.

On June 14<sup>th</sup> the Erie County Environmental Coalition hosted a public meeting at which over 80 people attended. Guest speakers at that meeting were Michael Parker of the Pittsburgh based organization Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP) and Mike Ewall of ActionPA, a state-wide environmental justice organization. Their presentations focused on the technology, the regulatory framework and the serious health/environmental consequences of such a facility. Following the meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup> Mike Ewall organized a meeting of the neighbors where the opposition crystallized into an effort to stop the construction. (KEEP)

Part of the neighborhood effort has focused on raising community wide awareness of the proposal and its serious health and environmental effects. Door to door leafleting has already begun and a petition to Erie City Council is being circulated.

While the neighbors and the environmental community recognize the "tire problem," incineration is not the answer. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection states that the use of tires to produce energy as the worst use of discarded tires.

Local environmental groups that have assisted KEEP in its formation include the Erie County Environmental Coalition, the Gaia Defense League and the Green Party of Erie County.

Interested and informed citizens are welcomed to the next KEEP meeting to be held at the Blasco Library's Admiral Room Monday, July 23 at 6:30 PM.