



Casella close to selling controversial Maine waste-to-energy facility

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H ighlights:

- Biddeford, Maine officials are meeting Monday evening to discuss terms on a deal to purchase and close the Maine Energy Recovery facility owned by Casella Waste Systems.
- Casella previously announced that they would sell the city the facility in exchange for \$7.5 million and ownership of a state landfill. The Maine State Senate, however, blocked the transfer of the landfill leaving the two parties to renegotiate.
- The \$102 million downtown incinerator has been controversial and unpopular since it was built in the early 1980s. The city hopes that closing the facility will increase development in the downtown area.
- See previous Waste Management Dive coverage

From the article:

Biddeford officials appear close to a deal to buy Maine Energy Recovery Co. from Casella Waste Systems Inc. in the city's latest attempt to close the downtown trash incinerator.

The City Council will meet privately Monday night to discuss terms of a deal that would let the city buy and close the incinerator that for years has generated complaints about foul odors and stymied economic development.

Negotiations began early this spring, and Casella announced in April that it would sell the plant to the city for \$7.5 million.

City officials say there have been changes to the agreement, but they cannot yet disclose them. They say the negotiations have been positive and city officials are more motivated than ever to reach an agreement to remove MERC and make way for more investment in the adjacent mill district.

"People within City Hall and owners of the mills have always indicated there are opportunities for development that disappear as soon as the discussion of Maine Energy is on the table," said Mayor Alan Casavant. "The removal of Maine Energy is going to present some economic benefits to the city of Biddeford. We've talked to a number of developers that indicated that would be a game-changer."

Casella announced in April that it planned to sell MERC to Biddeford and dismantle the incinerator.

The decision to build the trash-to-energy plant in downtown Biddeford was made in 1982. The \$105 million project became unpopular with residents and businesses almost immediately.

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