

New Waste-to-Energy System to Explore Sites in L.A.

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Wednesday, May 27, 2020

A new waste-to-energy technology, looking to set up shop at some landfill site in Los Angeles, has gotten a letter of support from Los Angeles County.

The letter is not a contract or guarantee, but it is a show of support from an important government that wants to reduce landfill use, said Kenn Phillips, the chief operating officer of Samaha Group of Sherman Oaks.

Samaha has rights to sell in the United States a waste-to-energy technology developed in Germany by Intec, said Phillips.

Phillips is well known in the Valley area because he was chief executive of the Valley Economic Alliance until he left in March.

Intec's system heats up refuse and turns it into a gas which in turn is used to power a turbine to make electricity. Some of the electricity is used to power the waste system but most can be sold to the electricity grid at low cost.

Phillips said trash also contains a surprising amount of water, which the system extracts. Some of the water is converted to steam as part of the electricity-generating component of the operation. Much of the rest of the water, which is not potable, would be returned to aquifers.

In a press release, Sam Samaha, principal of Samaha Group, said that with the system, 99 percent of landfill waste is converted to electricity "with no offensive odors, ash and no residue. The Intec system will reduce landfill dependency, and in addition to electrical generation, emission-free gas and coke are produced:'

Phillips said Samaha's next step is to make a deal with a local landfill site on which his company could locate one of its plants. Intec's biggest system needs about 60 acres, employs 200 and can process 4,000 tons of trash daily. The electricity generated could power 60,000 homes, and it can produce steady electricity for 24 hours a day, unlike wind or solar power.

Intec has finished testing in Europe, but it has no commercial operation yet, Phillips said. Although it is unproven in the market, the system has caught the interest of several big companies and Samaha has \$1.2 billion in financing lined up to deploy the technology, he said.