

**REPROCUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN EXISTING  
MUNICIPALLY OWNED REFUSE-TO-ENERGY PLANT  
PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ABSTRACT**

On May 7, 2007, the operating agreement for the Pinellas County mass-burn resource recovery facility will expire. This contract, originally negotiated in the late 1970's is one of the first in the United States for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of a municipally owned refuse-to-energy facility, and thus is one of the first to expire. In late 2003, Pinellas County began the process to reprocur an operator for its resource recovery facility under the terms of a new long-term agreement.

This paper discusses planning processes and reprocurement activities to date, including hiring a reprocurement consulting engineer; formation of the project team (Project Working Group and Project Oversight Committee); development of the project schedule; and, identification of the reprocurement approach (informal meetings with vendors, Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposals). The paper also addresses certain technical and contractual issues associated with contracting a 24-year old refuse-to-energy facility. Technical items considered are a modified approach to ash processing and metals recovery; whether or not to continue the WESPhix® ash treatment process; and the need for various capital improvements. Contractual matters include such items as ownership of spare parts; availability of operating documents and record drawings; transfer of proprietary licenses; and consideration of a transition agreement.

Pinellas County's reprocurement is being designed with the primary goal of developing a process that is fair, open and competitive; and one that provides a level playing field for all interested proposers. The paper draws comparisons between the reprocurement methods and processes considered, with conclusions about why the final reprocurement approach was selected.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Pinellas County, Florida (County) Resource Recovery facility (PCRRF) began commercial operations in 1983. This mass-burn refuse-to-energy plant serves as the primary solid waste disposal means for the County's population of nearly one million. The plant has a daily capacity of 3,150 tons of municipal solid waste, processed

through three water wall boilers each having a capacity of 1,050 tons per day. These units are the largest of their type in the United States. The electric energy produced is sold to Progress Energy Florida, Inc. under terms of a power purchase agreement that expires in 2024. The PCRRF is owned by Pinellas County with operation and maintenance contracted to Wheelabrator Pinellas, Inc. (WPI), a subsidiary of