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High-tech trash disposal gets public hearing tonight

A public hearing will be held this evening on Cleveland's plans to build a trash-disposal plant on Ridge Road.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Cleveland Division of Air Quality will hold the hearing at 6 p.m. at the Estabrook Recreation Center, 4125 Fulton Road. The Ohio EPA is to rule on the city's application for a permit.

City officials who support the project say the plant will not directly burn trash but instead will use high temperatures to turn it into ash and steam. Pellets formed from the ash would be sold or used to provide some of the electricity supplied by Cleveland Public Power.

Supporters say the plant would be part of a comprehen-

sive trash-disposal strategy that would also include citywide recycling. They say the plant would produce safe emissions and save on the cost of hauling garbage to landfills.

The Earth Day Coalition, Ohio Citizen Action and Sierra Club have criticized the proposal. They say the city deliberately plans to operate the plant at less than capacity to avoid stricter regulation.

Cleveland has been eyeing a Japanese technology that both supporters and critics say has not been used on garbage in the United States.

The cost has not been determined but is expected to be in the tens of millions of dollars. The city has not determined how it will pay for construction.