

WASTE-FUELED POWER UNDER CONSIDERATION

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[Article by Bernard Josephs]

[Text]

A scheme that could end the waste disposal problems of Israel's cities and provide a valuable new source of electrical power has been put forward by Energy Ministry experts.

The ministry has already called on Tel Aviv to take part in the project and says it will be good for other cities such as Haifa, where rubbish dumps are about to overflow.

The idea, tried successfully in Europe and the U.S., is to build specially designed power stations fuelled by household rubbish.

"In a short while, Tel Aviv's rubbish dump at Hiriye, near Ben-Gurion Airport, will be filled up. Then the waste will have to be shipped far away from the city, which will be a very expensive operation," said a ministry spokesman.

"Our solution will be cheaper for the cities, and a benefit to the country."

Ministry experts reckon that a plant capable of burning 1,200 tons of refuse a day would cost around \$70 million.

The project would be financed by private investors, whom the cities would pay for the right to dump their refuse at the power stations.

"That old English saying, where there's muck there's money, has never been truer," said an Energy Ministry official. "We know of at least one city that is paying \$20 a ton just to dump its waste in a rubbish dump."

The Electric Corporation would undertake to buy all the power produced by such plants. "We are not saying that we can power the country by burning rubbish. But there is no question that such a scheme would be a valuable addition to our electrical grid," said the spokesman.

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