

# Dallas may ban incinerator permits

DALLAS (AP) — A proposal opposing incinerator permits could make Dallas the first city in the nation to ban hazardous waste incinerators.

A city environmental commission on Monday unanimously approved a regulation which would oppose all hazardous waste incinerator permits sought in Dallas through the Texas Water Commission.

Although state permits legally could be obtained, the city would refuse to issue zoning permits, effectively banning such incinerators from city limits.

There are not any hazardous

## City's environmental commission approves regulation against hazardous waste facility

waste incinerators in Dallas, although last year a company sought to build one. The council refused and had the environmental commission look into the issue.

The resulting proposal by the city's Environmental Health Advisory Commission is part of a package of recommendations for regulating all types of commercial incinerators. The City Plan Commission will consider the proposal May 16, and the City Council will hear it June 26.

"The city of Dallas is clearly stating that it is not interested in having a hazardous waste incinerator, and that it will be a costly and laborious process to locate one here," said Elizabeth Todd, a member of the commission.

Anna Albers, a citizen on the task force that drafted the proposal, said the recommendation was only a first step. She said restrictions for other incinerators, such as those for medical and municipal waste, are too lenient. Environmentalists who say

the incinerators emit deadly toxins called the recommendation a victory, but industry officials criticized it as shortsighted and unnecessary.

"There is no better, more tightly controlled emitter than a permitted incinerator," said Richard Fortuna, executive director of the Washington-based Hazardous Waste Trade Council.

Fortuna said he had not heard of any other city attempting to ban hazardous waste incinerators. Some cities have failed in trying to prohibit other kinds of hazardous waste facilities.

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## Americans able to peek at shuttle

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Americans who rarely get to see a space shuttle overhead will be able to view Discovery as it passes over much of the United States on a "Star Wars" research mission.

The shuttle's orbital path usually does not take it north of Texas or Florida. But Discovery's rare 57-degree inclination — the angle of a ship's orbit to the equator — sends it as far north as the Aleutian Islands and Newfoundland. The high inclination was required for mission observations.

Discovery will resemble a tiny, swiftly moving star and be visible to the naked eye.

The high inclination also provides a treat for Discovery's seven astronauts. They will pass over three-quarters of the world's land mass during the flight, giving them daylight views of seldom seen parts of the planet.

Discovery will fly over Austin Thursday at 6:08 a.m., one minute, 15 degrees above the south-southwest horizon to 41 degrees above the south-southeast horizon; and Friday at 6:02 a.m., two minutes, 17 degrees above the southwest horizon to 72 degrees above the north-northwest horizon.

The shuttle will fly over Houston Thursday at 6:08 a.m., two minutes, 15 degrees above the south-southwest horizon to 82 degrees above the south-southeast horizon.

## Officials say workers' comp nears point of collapse

AUSTIN (AP) — The state workers' compensation system is on the verge of collapse because of escalating costs, and some major insurers are pulling out of Texas, officials said.

The system of providing benefits for workers injured on the job has deteriorated "to the point that the entire private insurance market could collapse unless corrective actions are taken in the near future," Insurance Commissioner Phil Barnes said Monday.

Testifying before the Legislative Oversight Committee on Workers' Compensation, Barnes called for deregulation of rates and a new state fund that would take over from insurers the responsibility of providing coverage to employers who otherwise cannot find a company willing to sell them a policy.

The collapse of the system could leave injured workers dependent on their employers for lost wages and medical costs, and leave employers open to civil liability lawsuits from which their insurance now protects them.

Barnes said the immediate problem is a growing, \$1.5 billion deficit in the assigned risk pool, which sells insurance to employers who are unable to get coverage on the open market. The pool then assesses all insurers a share of the cost based on their share of the market for workers' comp insurance.

Insurers say the pool has developed this deficit because of escalating costs in claims and the State Board of Insurance's reluctance to raise premiums high enough.

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