

Chennai Corporation to start work in October to reclaim 265 acres of Kodungaiyur dumping ground

NGOs urge the Corporation to shelve waste-to-energy plants citing risk of release of dioxin, nitrogen dioxide, mercury and sulphur dioxide which could be health hazards

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A total of 65 lakh tonnes of legacy waste is proposed to be cleared from 265 acres of the Kodungaiyur dumping ground. | Photo Credit: B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

The Greater Chennai Corporation Council on Friday passed a resolution for reclamation of Kodungaiyur dumping ground in north Chennai through bio-mining technology. The work is expected to begin by October end and will be completed in two years.

A total of 65 lakh tonnes of legacy waste will be cleared from 265 acres of the dump yard. The refuse derived fuel will be sent to places such as Vijayawada for the cement industry. The tender evaluation of the project is under way. The biomining in Kodungaiyur will be different from that of Perungudi as the volume is high and higher capacity machinery will be used. “We will use multiple units at five locations. Each plant will process 1,800 cubic metres of waste daily,” said Chief Engineer N. Mahesan.

Anna University and other agencies will monitor air and water pollution near residential areas in the vicinity of Kodungaiyur during the implementation of the project. As many as 190 ragpickers will be rehabilitated as part of the project. The project proposal was placed in the fourth State-level technical committee held on November 8, 2022 and the committee has approved the biomining estimated at ₹640 crore, the officials said.

Funding pattern

The Centre will fund 25% of the project cost, the State government 16% and the Corporation will bear 59% of the project cost. The social and environmental cost of the project is estimated at ₹7.55 crore. About ₹90-crore loan from Tamil Urban Development Fund and ₹90-crore grant from project sustainability grant fund under KfW assisted SMIF-TN-III programme will be used for implementing the project.

Solid waste management user charges of ₹80 crore would also be utilised to finance 12.34% of the project. The Corporation has decided to improve the collection efficiency of property tax to not less than 80% in two years to fund the project, the officials said.

The resolution only talked about reclamation through biomining and not the waste-to-energy project which was proposed. Already, NGOs such as Pasumai Thaayagam had opposed waste to energy projects as they release dioxin, nitrogen dioxide, mercury and sulphur dioxide, causing public health problems for residents.

