

## WHAT WE'RE ASKING OF MAYOR KENNEY:

40 environmental, public health, community and business organizations are demanding that Mayor Kenney call Carlton Williams and instruct his Streets Department **NOT to contract for the burning of Philadelphia's trash anywhere.**<sup>1</sup>

### This means:

- No contracts with companies that only incinerate waste (Covanta, Wheelabrator), and
- That any contract specify that waste burning is disallowed.
  - NOTE: The current contract with Waste Management includes their Northeast Philly "SpecFuel" plant that feeds trash as fuel to be burned in cement kilns in PA's Lehigh Valley.

While Chester is home to the largest and dirtiest of them, all of the trash incinerators and cement kilns being used to burn Philly's trash are far more polluting than the state's landfills.<sup>2</sup>

## THE EDUCATION NEXUS

Mayor Kenney is framing himself as the education mayor. A leading cause of missed school (and work) days is asthma. Nitrogen oxides (NOx) are a key trigger of asthma attacks. After the PHL airport and the PES oil refinery, the trash incinerators in Chester City, Montgomery County, and Bucks County are the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> largest sources of NOx in the 5-county Philadelphia area.<sup>3</sup> Philly sends trash to all three of them.<sup>4</sup> Collectively, these three incinerators release more NOx pollution than the airport or oil refinery.

The American Lung Association recently gave all five counties in this area an "F" for smog pollution (the ground-level ozone formed by NOx).<sup>5</sup>

## ALTERNATIVES (WHERE SHOULD WASTE GO?)

The ultimate answer is to reduce waste (see below), but as we work toward that, we need to be honest about the fact that landfills are less damaging than burning trash and dumping toxic ash in landfills.<sup>6</sup>

Pennsylvania is awash in landfill capacity. Having overpermitted for landfill space, PA has been the largest trash importer for decades, filling landfills with waste from Canada through Puerto Rico and nearly every state in-between.<sup>7</sup>

Under Philly's current contracts, the city has been sending waste to all six of the state's incinerators and 19 of its 44 landfills. There is a major new landfill in Bucks County, in the same Township as one of the incinerators used. There are four landfills in Berks County. One of them (Conestoga Landfill) is just off of the PA Turnpike. Philadelphia already uses all six of these landfills.<sup>8</sup> Conestoga Landfill alone has five times the permitted capacity needed to handle all of the trash Philadelphia sends to incinerators.<sup>9</sup>

## ZERO WASTE SOLUTIONS

The quickest, most effective *and* most cost-effective way to reduce waste to do what 10,000 other communities are now doing: unit pricing, or "pay as you throw" – charging people per bag of trash, but collecting recycling and composting for "free" (the cost is placed on the trash bags only). This causes people to reduce waste by 44% on average, pretty immediately, with no significant increase in illegal dumping.<sup>10</sup> Philadelphia's "zero waste" plan leaves out this solution, even though other major cities in the region are developing pilot projects to get it started.<sup>11</sup> Zero Waste is a set of solutions that does not permit incineration, and aims for at least 90% reduction in the use of landfills.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.energyjustice.net/files/pa/philly/signon.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> National Emissions Inventory, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. [www.epa.gov/air-emissions-inventories/2014-national-emissions-inventory-nei-data](http://www.epa.gov/air-emissions-inventories/2014-national-emissions-inventory-nei-data)

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Division of Reporting and Fees data.

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/SolidWaste/MunicipalWaste/Pages/MW-Disposal-Info.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.lung.org/our-initiatives/healthy-air/sota/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.energyjustice.net/files/incineration/incineration\\_vs\\_landfills.pdf](http://www.energyjustice.net/files/incineration/incineration_vs_landfills.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.actionpa.org/waste>; Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Division of Reporting and Fees data. <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/SolidWaste/MunicipalWaste/Pages/MW-Disposal-Info.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Division of Reporting and Fees data.

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/SolidWaste/MunicipalWaste/Pages/MW-Disposal-Info.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/SolidWaste/MunicipalWaste/MunicipalWastePermitting/Pages/MW-Landfills-and-Resource-Recovery-Facilities.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SWS/master-plan.html> - See two “pay as you throw” presentations in the “presentations” section at the bottom of the page.

<sup>11</sup> [https://cleanphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Zero\\_Waste\\_and\\_Litter\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](https://cleanphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Zero_Waste_and_Litter_Action_Plan.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> See <http://zwia.org/policies/> and <http://www.energyjustice.net/zerowaste/>