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DON'T TRASH OUR AIR!

SAY NO TO GARBAGE INCINERATION IN NEW YORK CITY

The Bloomberg Administration's PlaNYC 2030 calls for piloting "thermal processing" technologies to handle the city's solid waste. These newer "waste-to-energy" technologies, like gasification, pyrolysis, and plasma arc incineration, convert waste to gas before burning it, and are promoted as "modern" alternatives to conventional mass-burn incinerators. But they pose the same threats as the older garbage incinerators do:

UNSAFE → Burning garbage releases harmful emissions into the air we breathe. Burning municipal solid waste can release harmful emissions into the air, including particulate matter, volatile organic chemicals, heavy metals, mercury, acid gases, dioxins & furans - potent carcinogens generated during combustion. Studies show the new incinerator technologies emit comparable levels of toxic emissions as conventional mass burn incinerators, as well as particulate matter contributing to heart & respiratory disease.

UNPROVEN → "New" incineration technologies have not been shown to work well. There are no commercial scale gasification or pyrolysis incinerators operating in the U.S. Their record here and abroad has been plagued with operational problems including malfunctions, explosions and shutdowns. Serious accidents resulting in the uncontrolled release of incinerator gases have taken place in Germany and elsewhere, and numerous gasification, pyrolysis, and plasma arc incinerators never made it past the design stage or have had to be permanently shut down. Experimenting with these new technologies in a densely populated area such as New York City is unnecessary and risky.

INEQUITABLE → Communities of color will be disproportionately impacted by any new incinerators. Given NYC's zoning laws, most of the locations where an incinerator could be sited in NYC are in, or adjacent, to low-income communities of color that are already disproportionately burdened by pollution.

So, what **SHOULD** we do with the waste that New York City doesn't recycle?

Recycle it! 80-90% of the municipal solid waste stream can be recycled, reused or composted. But NYC only recycles 15% of its MSW - the rest is exported to landfills and incinerators. European countries using WTE incineration as part of their waste management strategy do so after achieving robust recycling rates:

Netherlands: 65% Austria: 59% Germany: 58% Sweden: 41% Denmark: 41%

Recycling creates 10 times as many jobs as incineration or landfilling. It reduces greenhouse gas emissions and saves energy. *This is the true wasted opportunity!*