From: Tigerlily Lin
To: erda.sm.scopingplan
Subject: Submit a Public Comment on NY"s Draft Scoping Plan
Date: Friday, July 1, 2022 2:41:14 PM

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the draft scoping plan. As required by New York's nation-leading climate law, the CLCPA, climate and environmental justice must be the driver of the outcomes of this scoping plan.

Studies find that proximity to waste incineration may increase the risk of cancers, birth defects, and other adverse health impacts. Often, low-income and communities of color are sacrificed to withstand living near these toxic facilities; in the U.S. nearly 80% of municipal solid waste incinerators are situated in areas that are considered communities of color, low-income communities, or both.

There are still ten municipal waste incinerators operating in NYS, and five of the ten are concentrated downstate and overlap with already overburdened disadvantaged communities. Communities consistently and powerfully resist these incinerators that pose high risks to their health and wellbeing.

Long Island alone has four incinerators owned by Covanta (Hempstead, Islip, Babylon, and Huntington). There's also the issue of toxic ash from incineration which then must be disposed of carefully. This is a recurring issue. On Long Island, there is an active whistleblower case, in Covanta Hempstead, of over a decade of egregious violations of state and federal law after the company knowingly risked the exposure of Long Island residents and Covanta workers to highly toxic ash. The facility produces 500-750 tons of toxic ash per day, including heavy metals, dioxins, furans, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) that pose serious threats to human health. Because of the damage done by these facilities to surrounding communities and beyond, advocates are currently fighting against incinerator ash dumping on Long Island.

The incinerator industry is in decline because of its inherently bad business model for waste management: it is expensive, polluting technology with unjust siting due to unanimous undesirability. Not only does waste-to-energy produce minuscule amounts of energy, the industry attempts—and sometimes succeeds at–being considered "renewable energy" in certain states.

While the draft scoping plan sets out to reduce combustion in virtually every other polluting sector, the Waste Advisory Panel recommendations, on which the draft Scoping Plan is largely based, plan for the use of combustion to stay the same through at least 2050.

The final scoping plan needs to set the goal of no organics to landfills or incinerators, with a goal of ending shipment of all waste to incinerators and landfills by 2050 and converting these facilities to sustainable uses. New York State must become far less reliant on plastic recycling in general and reduce the production of all non-essential plastics drastically.

KEY POINTS:

1. The final scoping plan should explicitly recommend decommissioning NYS incinerators and ending contracts with out-of-state incinerators by 2030, as well as removing subsidies and rejecting permits for any new incinerators, or incineration facilities by any other names.

2. The final scoping plan should ban organics to landfills and incinerators, with a goal of ending the shipment of all waste to landfills and incinerators by 2050 and converting these facilities to sustainable uses.

3. As an alternative to landfills and incinerators, the final scoping plan's waste section should expand local-scale composting and recycling in equitably geographically distributed, well-run sites and facilities. This should include the conversion of some local transfer stations into composting, sorting, and processing sites.

4. The final scoping plan's waste section must include zero waste strategies to address the waste crisis in DACs, communities overburdened by waste transfer stations, incinerators, landfills, etc. Zero-waste strategies include re-use, upcycling, recycling, composting (on-site, community, and commercial), and re-fill systems and collection infrastructure, etc.

5. The final scoping plan must explicitly state that the use of anaerobic digestion includes the pre-condition that, to the greatest degree possible, the energy generated from AD facilities be used on-site (for example, providing power to the wastewater treatment plant that is home to the digester). The use of anaerobic digestion must not lead to the construction of new pipelines that can become part of the fossil fuel distribution infrastructure.

6. Recycling throughout the final scoping should not include any form of combusting waste, including plastics. This means no "advanced recycling," "chemical recycling," or pyrolysis. The alternative to burning difficult-to-recycle plastics is to stop producing plastics that are difficult to recycle and reduce, and eventually eliminate, the production of these plastics (typically low-value, flexible, resin types 3-7).

Sincerely,

Tigerlily Lin