



CLIMATE COALITION Montgomery County, MD

To: Council President Stewart and Council Members
From: Karen Metchis, Climate Coalition Montgomery County
Date: February 11, 2025
RE: Resolution to approve the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan 2025-2034

Council President Stewart and Councilmembers,

I am testifying today on behalf of the Climate Coalition of Montgomery County. Our Coalition of 20 organizations and hundreds of members supports the resolution to approve the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan 2025-2034 with one very important amendment.

The introduction to the 10-Year Solid Waste Management Plan says that the county will select an “end of life” disposal method *following* implementation of all diversion programs and technologies. This is our biggest concern with this Plan. In order to expedite closing of the incinerator, **the Solid Waste Management Plan should be modified to reflect that the alternative “end of life” disposal method should be implemented to the extent possible *simultaneously* with the implementation of other diversion programs and technologies, *not* after they are all in place.** Doing them sequentially assumes the incinerator will stay open for 7 more years, which goes against the stated goals of the county to minimize “environmental and public health impacts, racial and social justice implications, and facility impact”.

In our estimation, if the DEP had the *will* to do it, they could take this year to notify the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority of their intent to close the incinerator, notify both the County Council and the MDE and any other bodies needing to be notified, and complete the administrative aspects associated with closure. The *following* year they could issue *an RFP* to haul our trash to an acceptable landfill and do the reconfiguration needed to offload trash from garbage trucks to either railcars or tractor trailers at Shady Grove and then send them directly to one of the many

approved and available landfills identified and *vetted* for the county that are described in the Beyond Incineration report.

To repeat, the Solid Waste Management Plan should be modified to reflect that these operations will be implemented *simultaneously* and that the timeline for incinerator closure *will not be 7 years*.

In addition, we want to remind the Council that this Public Hearing today is *not* sufficient for the Public Hearing you and the public need on the incinerator contract extension.

For you to have a legal say regarding this extension, we have learned that the Council must introduce a *Resolution* to consider the contract extension and then hold a Hearing in 14 days before approving it - *all before March 25*. This requirement is *glaringly missing* from the information given on the DEP's website. Was this an unintentional act of omission, or an intentional act of co-mission to minimize opposition? We need the Resolution and Public Hearing on the contract extension so that the public can express their concerns AND so that the Council can consider all pertinent information and decide the best path forward.

In addition, please hold the DEP accountable on the promise they made during the recent briefing, to provide the cost information on the implications of extending the incinerator contract and also on the need to maintain it for the next 7 years. This cost information should include the cost of having to build out a new site for a Compost Facility for food scraps rather than using the Dickerson Yard Trim site.

Please also ask for the cost benefit analysis that the engineering firm, Arcadis, is contractually obligated to produce on the monetized health and environmental costs to the County of burning trash as opposed to landfilling it in a well-managed landfill with good methane gas capture. According to the scope of work with Arcadis, *this report is five months overdue*. You need this information to decide on the contract extension. We would also be grateful if the County Council would ensure that the community will have access to this information before the Public Hearing.

Thank you for advocating for us.