

To Montgomery County Council:

I am stunned that with little transparency and no public hearing, my County plans to extend the incinerator contract for another 5 years, meaning that residents will be living with it for at least another seven. In the briefing that the DEP did for the County Council a couple of weeks ago, they presented several different waste hauling strategies to landfill. These options went from a pretty simple one to very complex ones. The simplest strategy presented would involve unloading local trash trucks at Shady Grove and filling tractor trailers and sending them directly to landfill via existing highways located right next to Shady Grove. The most complicated strategy offered involved offloading trash trucks at Shady Grove, loading rail cars, sending them to Dickerson, unloading those rail cars and putting the trash on long haul tractor trailers and sending them to landfill. This option would require rebuilding 12 miles of country roads, finding a work-around historic bridge, and getting permits changed for environmental violations involving the surrounding ecosystem. In the presentation, Director Monger indicated that these two strategies would take exactly the same amount of time to implement. This would involve the two years remaining on the current contract plus an additional five years. It doesn't make sense to me that it needs seven years to complete the simplest solution. I understand that it will take some time to get the proper permits and also to reconfigure the loading and unloading part of Shady Grove but how do you need 7 years to do that?

Please do not ignore your constituents nor that you were elected to represent us. I understand that to hold a public hearing on the incinerator, a council member must introduce a resolution to deny the contract extension and only then can the hearing be held. It's one more example of the lack of transparency from DEP that citizens only just learned that the County Council must first take that step to deny, and not simply call for a hearing. Please have the courage to do that!