

**Submission
No 562**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

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I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to establish energy-from-waste (EfW) incineration facilities in or near countryside areas that support natural ecosystems, agricultural production, and residential communities. While the need for responsible waste management and renewable energy solutions is clear, incineration of mixed waste poses significant and long-term risks to environmental health, air quality, and local livelihoods.

1. Environmental and Ecological Concerns

The proposed sites are located in or near areas of ecological and agricultural significance. These regions often serve as habitats for native wildlife and as active farmland supporting local food production.

Airborne pollutants such as dioxins, heavy metals, and fine particulates generated by incinerators can settle on soil, vegetation, and waterways, undermining biodiversity and contaminating ecosystems.

Deposition on farmland risks bioaccumulation of toxins in crops and pastures, which may harm livestock and enter the human food chain.

Increased traffic and infrastructure demands from waste transport disrupt rural environments and contribute to habitat fragmentation.

2. Public Health and Residential Impacts

Communities in proximity to EfW facilities are exposed to elevated levels of air pollutants, which can exacerbate respiratory illnesses and other health issues.

Studies have shown that long-term exposure to emissions from incinerators correlates with higher rates of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and other chronic conditions.

Many proposed sites are near homes, schools, and farms, meaning residents and animals will bear the brunt of cumulative exposure.

3. Economic and Agricultural Risks

Rural economies depend heavily on agriculture, tourism, and natural amenity values—all of which can be undermined by the presence and perception of large-scale waste incineration.

Reduced agricultural confidence: Farmers may face lower market confidence in produce grown near an incinerator.

Negative impacts on tourism: Countryside areas attract visitors for their clean environment and natural beauty, both of which are incompatible with industrial-scale incineration facilities.

Property devaluation: Residential and rural land values typically decline in proximity to incineration plants.

4. Better Alternatives Exist

Modern waste management policy should prioritise waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and circular economy initiatives—not combustion.

EfW incineration disincentivises recycling and locks communities into decades-long waste supply contracts.

Advances in anaerobic digestion, mechanical-biological treatment, and material recovery facilities provide cleaner, community-oriented, and job-creating alternatives.

5. Policy and Planning Principles

Locating an incinerator in or near rural, agricultural, or residential zones runs counter to established planning and environmental protection principles, including:

The precautionary principle in environmental management;

National commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect biodiversity;

Community rights to clean air, safe food, and a healthy environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For the reasons outlined above, I urge the Committee to:

Reject proposals for energy-from-waste incineration facilities near countryside, agricultural, or residential zones.

Undertake a comprehensive impact assessment that fully considers environmental, agricultural, and health consequences.

Support investment in sustainable waste management alternatives that align with circular economy and zero-waste strategies.

Protect rural and natural environments as vital assets for food security, biodiversity, and community wellbeing.