

**Submission
No 1027**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED ENERGY FROM WASTE FACILITIES

Name: Mr Harry Fisher

Date Received: 31 October 2025

Dear Inquiry Panel,

I write as the occupier of a family farm located approximately 10 km from the proposed Waste to Energy (WtE) facility site. I am strongly opposed to this proposal. The proximity of the proposed facility to residential properties and agricultural land places my family, our livestock and our livelihood at unacceptable risk. Below I set out my primary concerns (public health, impacts on livestock/food safety, environment and community / property values) with supporting evidence and concrete actions I ask the inquiry to adopt.

1. Public health risks (emissions and uncertainty)

WtE/incineration processes can emit a mix of pollutants (fine particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants such as dioxins and furans, and emerging contaminants such as PFAS) that are associated with respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, developmental harms and cancer. Recent systematic reviews and public-health summaries identify continuing uncertainty and some evidence of increased health risks for populations living near municipal incinerators, and call for careful assessment and monitoring before approval (<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-23150-z>).

Why this matters to my family: airborne pollutants travel beyond fence lines. Even low-level chronic exposures are of concern for children and the elderly. Given the proximity (~10 km) a robust, independent assessment is required before any approval.

2. Impact on livestock, food safety and bioaccumulation risk

Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) like dioxins and some heavy metals can bioaccumulate in animal fat and soils, entering the food chain and affecting meat and dairy safety. Studies document how such contaminants can accumulate in livestock products if released locally, posing both animal-health and food-safety risks. I cannot risk contamination of my herd, pasture or produce (<https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/464278>).

3. Environmental impacts (ash, disposal, groundwater and biodiversity)

WtE operations produce bottom ash and fly ash that contain concentrated heavy metals and other contaminants. Improper management or re-use of ash can cause soil and water contamination. Lifecycle assessments of WtE versus alternatives (landfill diversion, recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion) show WtE's environmental footprint depends heavily on feedstock, emissions controls and disposal of residues, and those uncertainties magnify when sited near agricultural land (<https://www.epa.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Publications/WSP%20Waste%20to%20Energy%20Technical%20Report%20Stage%20Three.pdf>).

4. Community impacts and property values

Experience and empirical studies show that “undesirable” industrial facilities (including incinerators) can reduce local amenity, odour, traffic, noise and perceived health risk, and that this can translate into reduced property values or slower appreciation for nearby homes and farms. Meta-analyses and hedonic pricing studies indicate impacts vary, but the risk to local real estate and the economic wellbeing of residents is real and measurable. That will directly affect my family's financial security and the town's future (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10640-011-9467-9>).

5. Local consultation and trust (current evidence shows community concern)

In many jurisdictions, WtE proposals generate heightened community concern and opposition. Trust in monitoring and in operators' commitments is often low; declared mitigations (e.g., "best available technology") have in some cases failed to prevent exceedances or unplanned releases. The burden of proof should therefore be on proponents to demonstrate, with independent evidence, there will be no unacceptable impacts (<https://safeair.org.au/waste-to-energy-fact-sheet/>).

My requests to the Inquiry (clear, practical actions)

1. Reject the current proposal as sited near residential and agricultural land, unless the proponent can conclusively demonstrate no adverse health, ecological or food-safety impacts using independent, peer-reviewed assessment.

2. If the project proceeds to further assessment, require a comprehensive, independent Health Impact Assessment (HIA) that examines chronic low-level exposures, vulnerable groups (children, elderly), and plausible worst-case emissions scenarios (including start-up/shutdown and bypass events). The HIA must be publicly released and subject to independent peer review (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1753-6405.12939?>).

3. Require modelling of pollutant deposition and bioaccumulation specifically for nearby agricultural land, with monitoring plans for soils, pasture, milk and meat, and legally binding remediation/compensation obligations if contamination is detected (<https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/464278>).

4. Impose strict limits on feedstock composition (explicitly exclude some high-risk streams, e.g., PFAS-containing materials, medical waste unless separately assessed), and require continuous independent emissions monitoring (real-time, publicly accessible data) and strict penalties for exceedances (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/09/epa-waste-toxic-air-emissions?>).

5. Require a minimum buffer distance from residential and agricultural land (set by independent environmental and public-health criteria), and an economic impact assessment addressing property values, local employment and compensation mechanisms for affected landholders (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10640-011-9467-9>).

6. If approval is considered, demonstrate that WtE is the best option among alternatives (avoidance, recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion), supported by transparent lifecycle assessment and not simply by claimed generation of electricity (<https://doi.org/10.3390/su142315971>).

Closing (why this matters to me personally)

My family's livelihood, the health of our children and farm workers, the wellbeing of our livestock and the long-term value of our property are all at stake. A facility sited this close without exhaustive independent assessment and robust legally binding protections risks irreversible harm. I respectfully ask the Inquiry to place precaution, transparent science and community wellbeing ahead of expedient waste disposal.

I am happy to provide more information about our property, our stock and the local community impacts, and I request to be notified of any hearings or decisions. Please acknowledge receipt of this submission.