

- Madame Chairman, and members of the Public Works and Transportation committee,
- Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to speak to your committee **and for your service.**
- Having served on many boards, I know it can often be a thankless job often taken for granted.
  - when we turn on our water we don't think much about all of the work that went into bring it to us.
- **My name is Barbara Klipp** and I am speaking on behalf of "Incinerator-Free Lake County" I am a professional flutist by trade. I am a member of a Symphony Orchestra, have a large teaching studio and am on the faculty of the College of Lake County.
- I originally joined this effort because as a professional flutist I am intimately influenced by and sensitive to air quality. **I am in the unique position of "breathing for a living"**. In fact, our dress code in the orchestra prohibits the use of hair sprays and perfumes for this very reason.
- However, **the college instructor in me needed to do due diligence and research the topic thoroughly.** I now more than I ever thought I would about solid waste disposal and frankly have spent more time researching this than my Master's Thesis. I believe I can speak for our group in saying that this has been a fascinating & enlightening journey.
- **As a lifelong resident of Lake County and mother** now raising a family here, I have a vested interest in the quality of life, sustainability and welfare of Lake County.
- **I personally live very close to Countryside Landfill and am very aware that our solid waste does not just "go away".**

- **Our group formed when we learned about the Citizen Advisory Committee's recommendations about 3 weeks ago. In addition to a great deal of research, we have mobilized within the county and have collected approx. 1750 signatures on a petition respectfully requesting that your committee and the County Board as a whole remove Mass Burn Incineration from the proposal (section 4.2.4) as well as section 4.2.7 which includes so-called waste-to-energy technologies. We would, however like to see composting remain in the plan with a few limitations.**

- **Our opposition is on the following grounds:**

### **#1. Health risks to the region:**

- a. No doubt, municipal waste incineration has improved in facility design, construction and operation over the years. Nonetheless, even the most modern, state-of-the-art MSW incinerator releases toxic pollutants in its gases, residues & ash. Some of the pollutants, such as dioxins and similar chemicals, are not only highly toxic but also persistent and bioaccumulative. Those released in the gas emissions are available for inhalation. They travel through the air and deposit on soils, surface waters and vegetation, entering the food web, where they bioaccumulate and biomagnify.
- b. In general, there are a handful of toxins including dioxin - the most dangerous toxin known to man - that are widely known as the residual pollution from incinerating municipal solid waste.
- c. Pollution monitoring varies depending how much money has been spent on the various monitoring technologies.
- d. Tests are always scheduled, so facility engineers can plan for tests to be run during optimum conditions. Technology to continuously monitor heavy metals and dioxin do exist, but can be prohibitively expensive.
- e. There have been many studies which show a correlation between the toxins released from incineration and their impact on people living near these facilities.
- f. Health effects associated with incineration are: increased risks for cancer, respiratory and heart diseases, reproductive and other disorders as well as birth defects

- g. Toxic metals accumulate in the body and have been implicated in a range of emotional and behavioral problems in children including autism, dyslexia, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning difficulties and delinquency, and in problems in adults including violence, dementia, depression and Parkinson's disease. These metals are universally present in incinerator emissions and present in high concentrations in the fly ash.
- h. "Present safety measures are designed to avoid acute toxic effects in the immediate neighborhood, but ignore the fact that many of the pollutants bioaccumulate, can enter the food chain and can cause chronic illnesses over time and over a much wider geographical area. No official attempts have been made to assess the effects of emissions on long-term health."
- i. We have prepared a document on our findings for you which we will forward to you if you'd like to know more.
- j. **We have articles for you on particulate emissions and health by Professor Vyvyan Howard & article entitled: Incinerators Trash Public Health**

## 2. **Environmental Consequences:**

- In addition to the aforementioned consequences, incineration is NOT an efficient way to generate energy.
- 3-4 times more energy can be saved by a combination of reuse, recycling and composting compared to incineration
- incinerators emit more CO<sub>2</sub> per megawatt-hour than coal-fired power plants
- With incineration we convert 3 tons of trash into 1 ton of ash
- **There are also significant climate consequences:**  
38% of greenhouse gases come from the goods and materials that we produce, consume and throw away. Reducing, reusing and recycling will greatly reduce these emissions

### **#3. Lack of proven, cost-effective technologies which do NOT have toxic by products.**

- a. the technologies are proven on paper, but most often are NOT cost effective and in NO cases result in NO toxic by-products.
- b. Angela Tin, the VP of Environmental Health for the American Lung Association for the Upper Midwest, who was an IL EPA permitter for over 20 years and who would be happy to speak with you, has said that
  - a. Even though many of these technologies look excellent in theory, when the engineers leave and the daily operations fall to lay people, there are often problems. There always are. Since there is no "real-time" monitoring, by the time the EPA learns of a failure or breach, the damage has already been done and can't be undone.
  - b. She went on to say that the current, fairly unsegregated waste stream in MSW is the most troubling to her. Both in regard to incineration and landfill.

### **#4. Considerable Financial Risks to the county:**

- As we look to the future, municipalities should be cautious when entering into long-term commitments for their waste, especially if they require substantial investments.
- Given the range of technologies, costs can vary dramatically. Variables such as capacity, the amount of up-front sorting required, emission testing and monitoring technologies, operator training, ash management, and the incineration process (technology) all impact the project costs.
- there are two financing models for incineration facilities. The most common are privately owned and operated projects which require a guaranteed flow of waste and set tip fee. The owner is guaranteed revenue to cover capital and operating costs and profits, with a fixed amount of waste or a cash penalty. **"Put or pay" contracts involve communities supplying waste or paying a penalty for the life of the thermal facility - about 20 years or more.**

- There are countless case studies of communities around the world whose incineration projects have landed them into significant debt, as a result of insufficient waste generation, insufficient calorific content in the waste, surpassing allowable emission limits, and unplanned mechanical failures, which required additional cost investments from the community.
- As we plan for the future - where energy conservation and environmental protection are crucial - we must be aware that this future is unsure about what new diversion technologies will emerge, the amount of waste available for disposal and the composition (i.e., calorific value) of waste. This is why plans for waste disposal require flexibility - the kind of flexibility that the economics of incineration will not bear.
- Instead, municipal finances should support the 3Rs and composting, with the remaining residual waste managed in a manner which has the lowest risk, lowest environmental impact, and allows for diminished quantities over time.
- **We have a letter from a former county board member in Camden County NJ named Mark Lohbauer. His experience is a perfect example of the kind of financial havoc that such financial arrangements can incur.**

## **#5. There are many more jobs created through Recycling than Lanfilling OR Incineration. We can't stress this enough.**

- **For example, In Nova Scotia:** They achieved 50% diversion in 5 years (Halifax ~ 60%)  
1000 jobs created collecting and treating discarded materials  
Another 2000 jobs created in the industries handling the collected material  
Nearly all the separated materials are re-used in Nova Scotia's own industries.

## **#6 Incinerators in Lake County are a disincentive for new businesses and residents to locate here.**

- We have a copy of a letter which was sent to you from Sue Carey VP for Century 21 in Libertyville. She specializes in executive relocation and is challenged daily to “sell” Lake County because of the Landfill problems we currently have. She is very concerned that incinerators would exacerbate this problem

## **#7. Materials which are incinerated (and landfilled) can not be recycled and we lose valuable resources**

- Incineration creates a disincentive to recycle via put or pay contracts
- “Even if we made incineration safe we would never make it sensible. It simply does not make sense to spend so much money destroying resources we should be sharing with the future.”

## **#8. We are concerned about lowered property values in the immediate vicinity of the incineration facility.**

## **#9. Even if we chose to incinerate, we will still need landfills:**

- a. Incinerators do not make waste disappear. For every five truckloads of waste burned, four truckloads are pumped into the atmosphere and one remains as toxic ash, which still must be carefully stored or landfilled.
- b. We will have to dispose of the toxic ash and materials which are not allowed to be incinerated by law.
- c. I should mention that although something in the order of 60% of our current landfill space is from Cook County, we can explore legal options of keeping Chicago garbage out of our landfills. A recent book on the subject was just published by U VA

Press and it has been done in several counties in the US already. I will forward this information for you.

• **In summation,**

- Neil Seldman, from the Institute for Local Self Reliance, told me that there has not been a new incinerators built in the US since 1995.
  - Incinerators generate toxic ash which is poorly handled
  - They generate toxic air emissions, which are poorly monitored
  - They are extremely expensive and a poor investment for our children.
  - They are very unpopular with the public and pushed into communities undemocratically
  - They are not sustainable
  - Most of the money spent on incinerators goes into complicated machinery and leaves the community, whereas the money spent on the alternatives goes into jobs and stays in the community.
  - They waste material resources
  - wastes energy
  - waste the opportunity to fight global warming and the many other impacts of extracting and processing virgin materials
  - It is a scientific law that matter does not just "go away". It cannot. The question we have to ask ourselves is what form do we want our waste to take; toxic by-products in the form of emissions and toxic ash or renewed resources which can be reused in sustainable way for the benefit of our county, our children and the planet?

Mr. Willis and Mike Hey who served on the Citizen Advisory committee have explained to me that they are advocating keeping incineration in the plan to keep the option as a possibility. We believe that this is not the best use of our resources.

This plan does not address the cost of exploring these options. For example, the county would have to spend over \$500,000 to check out the feasibility of a 1,500-tpd mass burn incinerator. Exploring the recycling and composting option, which can yield the same diversion rate, costs \$50,000; or the County staff can undertake this.

- We would prefer to see **expansion of our current recycling programs and adoption of more progressive, recycling and zero waste initiatives** which are less costly, create more jobs and do not have a negative impact to the local environment.
- Our county is doing well in this regard - better than the national average, I believe, but we are in agreement with Mr. Willis that there is definitely room for improvement.
- **The benefits of increased recycling efforts are :**
  - No toxic byproducts
  - Less financial risk to the county
  - JOBS!
    - recycling produces 10X's more jobs per ton of waste than incineration or land filling
    - starting wages for union recycling firms are \$20 per hour - enough to begin to lift workers and their families out of poverty (according to [www.goodjobsfirst.org](http://www.goodjobsfirst.org))
  - Nearly 90% of what is currently disposed of in landfills and incinerators is readily recyclable and compost able materials. ([www.stoptrashingthecolimate.org](http://www.stoptrashingthecolimate.org))
  - There are many other, progressive communities successfully implementing Zero Waste Initiatives around the country and around the world.

## **In conclusion:**

We have detailed our concerns with incineration including health risks, economics and environmental implications.

Our vision of the future exactly mirrors the Lake County Goals of enhancing livability and economic opportunity, promote a sustainable environment and build healthy and resilient communities.

We believe here is a opportunity here for Lake County to be an innovator in recycling and economic development

- As a college instructor, I have to tell you that I have quoted and plagiarized from many sources and would be happy to provide any of you with the source information (in proper MLA format if you'd like) information, references, links and contact information to the people we have interviewed.
- In the spirit of zero waste, I will forward this and further, more detailed information about health risks, financial risks and JOBS to you in a digital format via email
- I'd like to thank Mr. Willis for taking, literally, hours of his time to explain the issues and clarify information for us and we hope to work in partnership with Mr. Willis and SWALCO toward a more sustainable and progressive future.

We are working with an expert on the issue of recycling and economic development named Neil Seldman, who is the president of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance in Washington DC (<http://www.ilsr.org>). Neil works with municipalities around the country to support environmentally sound and equitable community development via recycling initiatives and partnership with industry. He is a world-renown authority in this area and we feel he has a lot to offer this committee and the SWALCO effort in general. He has reviewed our plan and has several recommendations which I believe you might be interested to hear.

We hope that if the board is not yet compelled to remove incineration and alternative technologies from the solid waste disposal plan at this time, you will consider tabling this matter until we have a chance to have a meeting between Mr.Seldman you, Mr. Willis and local industry such as Waste Management.