



October 1, 2025

Councilmember Jaime Gauthier
City Hall, Room 316
1400 John F Kennedy Blvd
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Re: Support the Stop Trashing Our Air Act

Dear Councilmember Gauthier,

Last year, Delaware County Council voted to phase out the burning of the County's trash at the ReWorld incinerator (formerly Covanta) in the City of Chester. I then wrote a letter to Mayor Parker asking Philadelphia to follow suit and stop sending its trash to be burned in Chester.

I am pleased that you have introduced the Stop Trashing Our Air Act to do exactly that: to stop burning Philadelphia's trash in the City of Chester.

Decades ago, pressured by political corruption, the leaders of Chester City opted to trade our public health for table scraps by hosting the largest trash incinerator in the United States. Since then, every day trash has been burned in Chester has caused us misery, and the negative impacts have compounded over time. Our childhood asthma rate is the highest in the United States. The incinerator has devastated property values and prevented the development of new housing. We are Delaware County's waterfront city, yet our potential for economic revitalization is held back by the massive incinerator occupying 50 acres of that precious waterfront.

I am writing in thanks for your partnership in addressing this long-standing matter, which has profoundly affected the health and future of Chester residents for generations. I am urging your colleagues on Council to join us in this effort by ensuring Philadelphia supports and enacts the Stop Trashing Our Air Act without delay. By doing so, the City of Philadelphia has an opportunity to demonstrate regional leadership, uphold a shared commitment to public health, and help unlock new opportunities for economic revitalization along Chester's waterfront. Your leadership at this critical moment will help secure a healthier and more sustainable future for our residents, communities and the entire region.



Sincerely,

Stefan Roots
Mayor – City of Chester, PA

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COUNTY OF DELAWARE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING

November 14, 2025

Dear Mayor Cherele Parker and members of Philadelphia City Council,

I am writing to express my support for Bill No. 250768, the "Stop Trashing Our Act" Act, introduced by Councilmember Jamie Gauthier. I urge you to enact this legislation without delay.

Delaware County Council recently enacted the County's first Zero Waste Plan, which seeks to phase out local trash incineration. We took this action, in part, because we recognize that incineration poses a threat to the health, environment, and economy of Delaware County, the City of Philadelphia, and the entire Southeastern Pennsylvania region.

America's largest incinerator is in Delaware County. Toxic ash produced by this incinerator is more than twice as harmful to our constituents and the environment than if we landfilled the unburned trash instead.

The Chester incinerator is the largest single source of pollution in the region. It contributes to Chester having the highest asthma rate in the United States. 1 in 5 Philadelphia children also have asthma, leading to the city being recently designated an "Asthma Capital."

1/3rd of everything burned at the Reworld (Covanta) incinerator in Chester comes from Philadelphia. Delaware County is doing its part, but we need the City of Philadelphia's help to chart a safer, cleaner, and greener path. If you do not act now, it may be almost a decade before the City of Philadelphia will have another chance to phase out trash incineration.

Please help us keep trash out of our air, lungs, and atmosphere by enacting the Stop Trashing Our Air Act, before the City of Philadelphia renews its waste disposal contracts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Taylor".

Dr. Monica Taylor
Chair, Delaware County Council



Promoting and Protecting the Health of Delaware County

November 17, 2025

Testimony:

Lora Siegmann Werner, MPH
Director, Delaware County Health Department

Committee on the Environment, Hearing on Bill #250768
Monday, November 17th, 2025
1:00pm, City Hall, Philadelphia PA

Thank you so much for the opportunity to join my colleagues to reinforce Delaware County's strong support for the "Stop Trashing Our Air" Act.

I am the Director of the 3-year-old Delaware County Health Department. Prior to serving the County, I worked at the federal level for regional offices of the Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Federal Emergency Management Agency here in Philadelphia. I have over 30 years of public health experience that includes directing responses to chemical exposure and environmental public health concerns and building partnerships across the MidAtlantic region.

The incredibly impactful proposal you are considering today matters for health. It matters for the health of communities here in Philadelphia, and it matters for the health of your over half a million neighbors in Delaware County.

It matters for the sustainability of our region, as my colleague from Delaware County's Office of Sustainability just described.

It matters to address longstanding inequities in how we handle our wastes in this region.

As you can see from the letter of support written by Delaware County Council Chair Dr. Monica Taylor, and the personal testimony of both myself and Delaware County's Sustainability Officer at this committee hearing, this issue is of vital importance to Delaware County.

We are all navigating a shifting landscape right now — changing federal priorities, uncertain funding, and lack of support for health equity efforts. These realities make public health and environmental work challenging, but they also make it more important than ever.

In times of instability, local partnerships allow us to continue to focus on what is most important. I am immensely grateful for the leadership here in Philadelphia that is championing a proposal that is forward thinking and benefits not only the City of Philadelphia but neighboring counties.

This proposal would advance our mutual objectives to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of residents in both Philadelphia and Delaware County. It will shine as a model for other jurisdictions across our country.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lora S Werner".

Lora S Werner, MPH



BUREAU OF HEALTH

November 13, 2025

Honorable Mayor Charrell Parker
1400 John F Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mayor Parker:

As the Health Commissioner of the City of Chester, I want to thank you for your commitment to making Philadelphia safer, cleaner and greener. As your neighbor, the decisions that you make for Philadelphians directly impact Chester residents. Your promise speaks directly to the kind of leadership our people have been praying for. I want you to know that I fully support Councilmember Jamie Gauthier's Stop Trashing Our Air Act.

I'll never forget the 2023 mayoral debate, when another candidate dismissed Chester with the words "*Chester is Chester.*" You didn't let that slide. You stood up and said what so many of us have wanted to hear, that ignoring Black and Brown communities is unacceptable. You spoke the truth, and it was clear that the moment was more than political for you; it was personal. You spoke up for us. That moment told me everything I needed to know about your heart.

For decades, Chester residents have carried the health consequences of burning Philadelphia's trash. Furthermore, the air that is polluted with toxic emissions from the incinerator in Chester does not stop at Chester's borders. The wind blows it throughout the region and into Philadelphia. These toxic emissions further exacerbate **your high rates of infant deaths** (40% higher than national average), **cancer deaths** (30% higher than national average), and **pediatric asthma** (3 times worse than national average). The Stop Trashing Our Air Act recognizes that what harms Chester also harms Philadelphia.

Incineration is outdated. It is time for this region to follow other cities by investing in healthier, more sustainable waste solutions such as composting, recycling, and waste reduction. The Delaware County Zero Waste Plan demonstrated that relying on incineration is both costly and inefficient compared to landfill diversion. Advancing the Stop Trashing Our Air Act aligns Philadelphia with cities, like Chicago, that are moving toward zero-waste systems to protect their residents. Cities throughout the US are embracing cleaner, community-centered, and cost effective waste solutions. I hope that Philadelphia will join these efforts.

On behalf of the Chester Bureau of Health and the residents I serve, I urge you to advance this bill. Ending incineration contracts is a meaningful, concrete step that aligns with your city's broader commitment to making Philadelphia the "safest, greenest and cleanest big city in the nation."

Sincerely,


Kristin Ball Motley, PharmD, MBA
Health Commissioner

cc: Councilmember Jamie Gauthier