



**Delco Environmental Justice**  
[www.DelcoEJ.org](http://www.DelcoEJ.org)

# Philly Area's Burn Problem

The map displays the United States with numerous green pin icons marked with a white 'I', indicating burn problem locations. These pins are distributed across various states, with a high concentration in the Northeast, particularly around the Philadelphia area. The map includes labels for major cities such as Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Las Vegas, Dallas, Houston, Chicago, New York, and Boston. State names are also labeled, including Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, and New York. Two inset maps are provided: one in the top left corner showing Alaska with a pin near Anchorage, and one in the bottom left corner showing Hawaii with pins near Honolulu, Lahaina, and Kailua-Kona. A detailed inset map in the bottom right corner focuses on the Philadelphia area, showing pins near King of Prussia, Philadelphia, and Cherry Hill, along with major highways like I-276 and I-95.

[www.ejmap.org](http://www.ejmap.org)

# Philly Area's Burn Problem

The map displays the United States with numerous green pin markers, each containing a white letter 'I', indicating burn problem locations. These markers are distributed across the country, with a high concentration in the Northeast, particularly around the Philadelphia area. The map also shows state boundaries and names, as well as major cities. Two inset maps are provided: one in the top left corner showing Alaska with a single 'I' marker, and one in the bottom left corner showing Hawaii with several 'I' markers. A detailed inset map in the bottom right corner focuses on the Philadelphia area, showing markers near King of Prussia, Philadelphia, and Cherry Hill, along with major highways like I-276 and I-95.

[www.ejmap.org](http://www.ejmap.org)

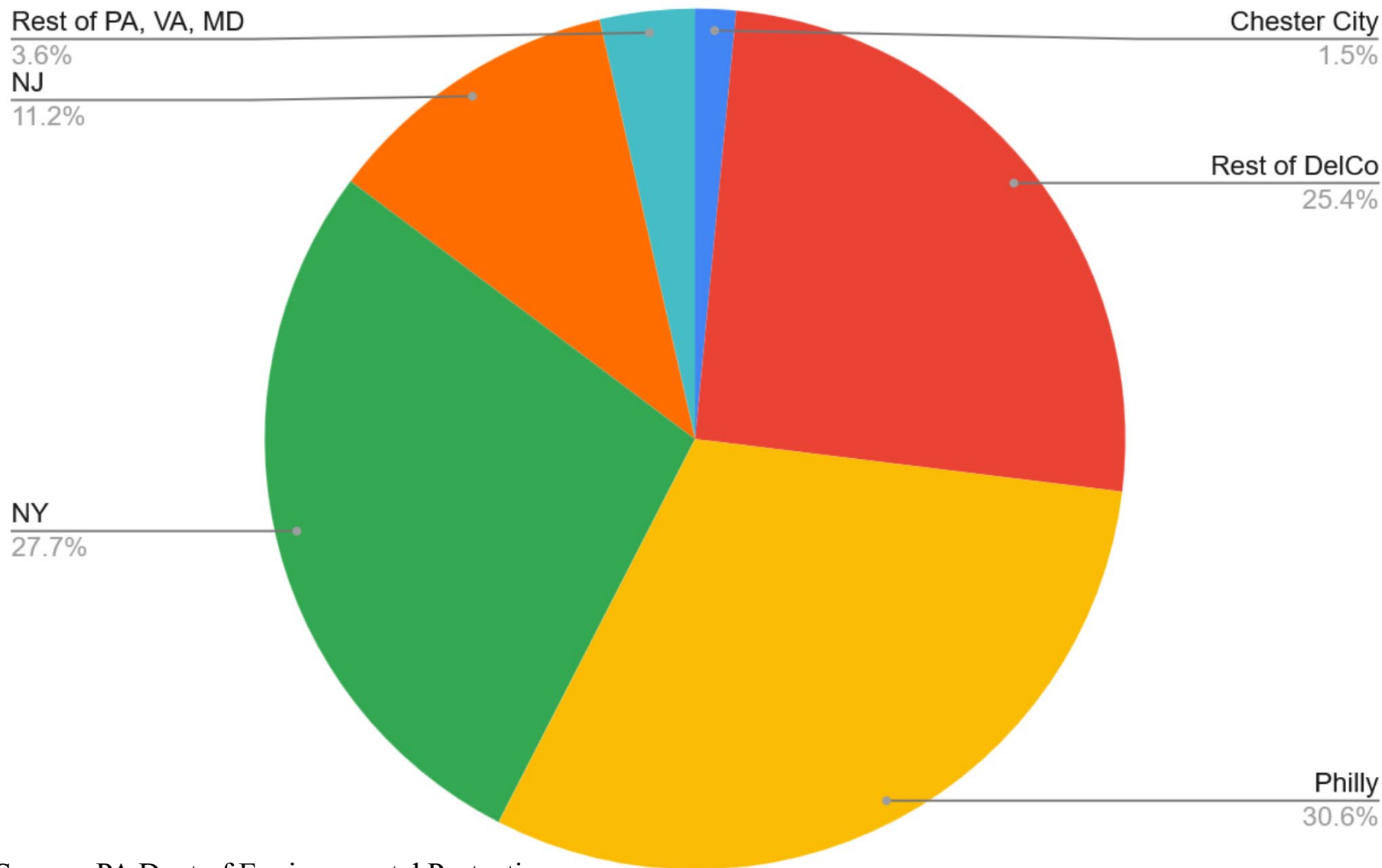
# Where Philly's Trash Goes (2024)

Facility	County	Tons	%
Fairless Landfill	Bucks	687,681	54%
Reworld (Covanta) Delaware Valley	Delaware	355,139	28%
Modern Landfill	York	112,514	9%
Wheelabrator Falls	Bucks	73,208	6%
Reworld (Covanta) Plymouth	Montgomery	37,620	3%
York County Resource Recovery Center	York	6,073	0.5%
Pioneer Crossing Landfill	Berks	4,309	0.3%
Conestoga Landfill	Berks	3,552	0.3%
Western Berks Landfill	Berks	953	0.1%
LCSWMA Resource Facility	Lancaster	10	0.0%
Keystone Sanitary Landfill	Lackawanna	8	0.0%
Grand Central Sanitary Landfill	Northampton	1.6	0.0%
Commonwealth Environmental Systems Landfill	Schuylkill	0.4	0.0%

36% of Philly's waste is incinerated...  
mainly at Reworld Delaware Valley in Chester City.

50% collected by city (residential up to six units)

# Waste Burned at Reworld Incinerator in Chester (2024)



Source: PA Dept of Environmental Protection

[http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/WM/PBI/Solid\\_Waste\\_Disposal\\_Information](http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/WM/PBI/Solid_Waste_Disposal_Information)





# Trash Incineration & Environmental Racism



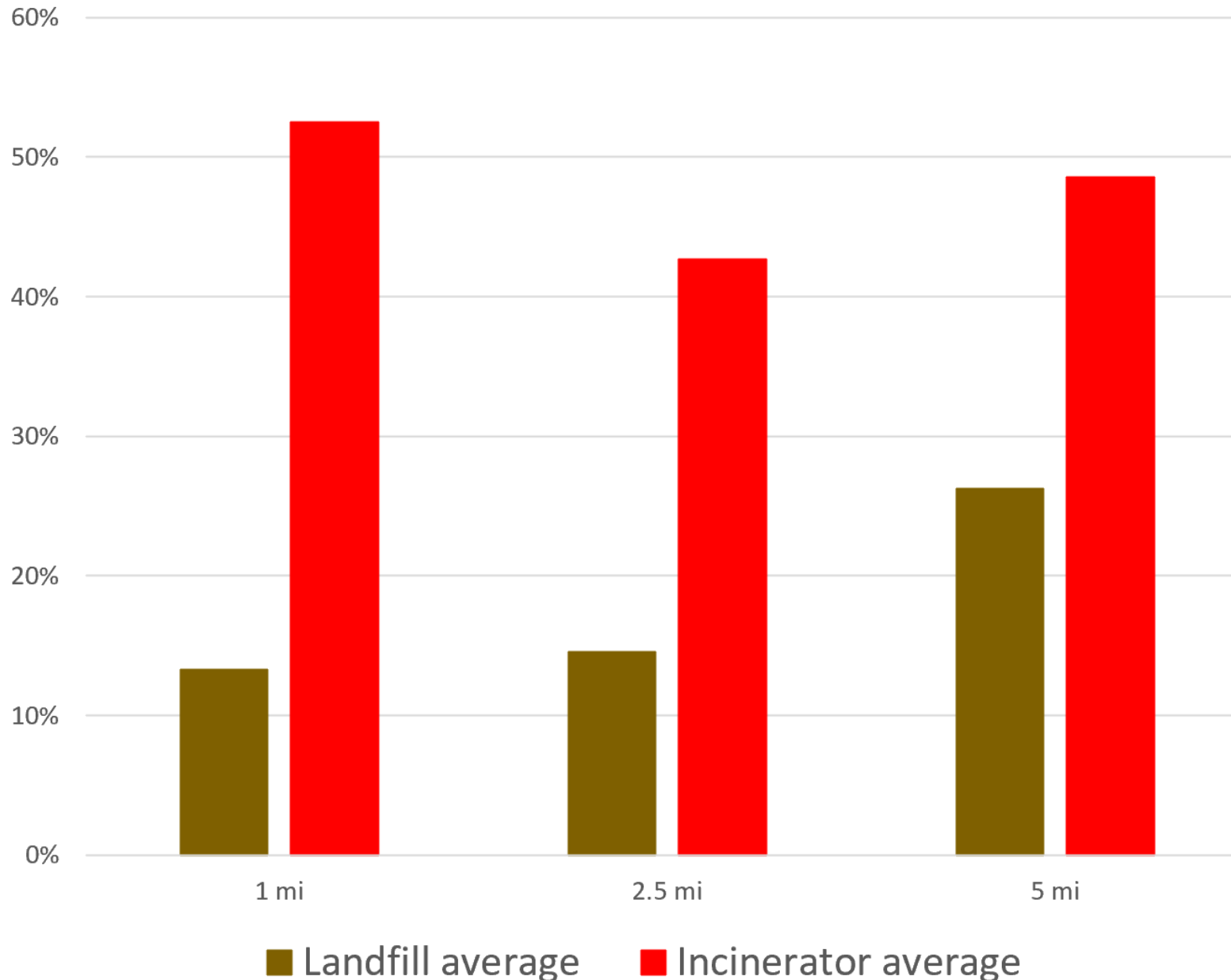


# Trash Incineration & Environmental Racism

- 63% of the 62 commercial-scale trash incinerators still operating in the U.S. as of August 2025 sit in majority white communities, but...
- The largest incinerators are in more urban communities, causing the whole industry to be disproportionately impacting people of color
- 14 of 20 largest incinerators in BIPOC communities
- Black people most disproportionately impacted
- Trash incinerators in BIPOC communities are surrounded by 2.5 times as many people and are twice as large as those in white communities

[www.energyjustice.net/incineration/ej](http://www.energyjustice.net/incineration/ej)

# BIPOC Percentage Living near the landfills and incinerators Philly uses



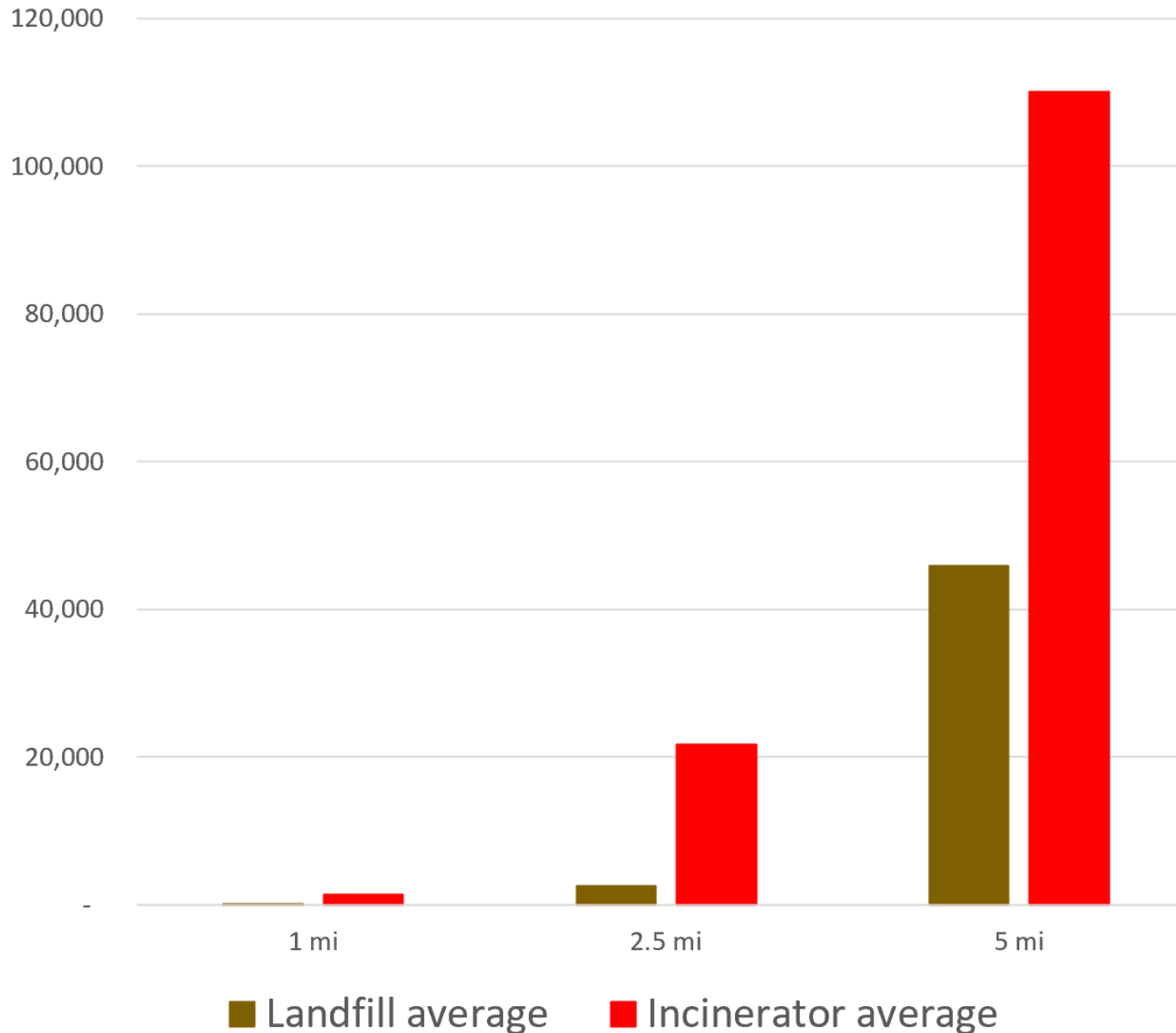


# **Median Household Income at Census tracts hosting Landfills & Incinerators Philly Uses**

Incinerators: \$54,898

Landfills: \$95,870

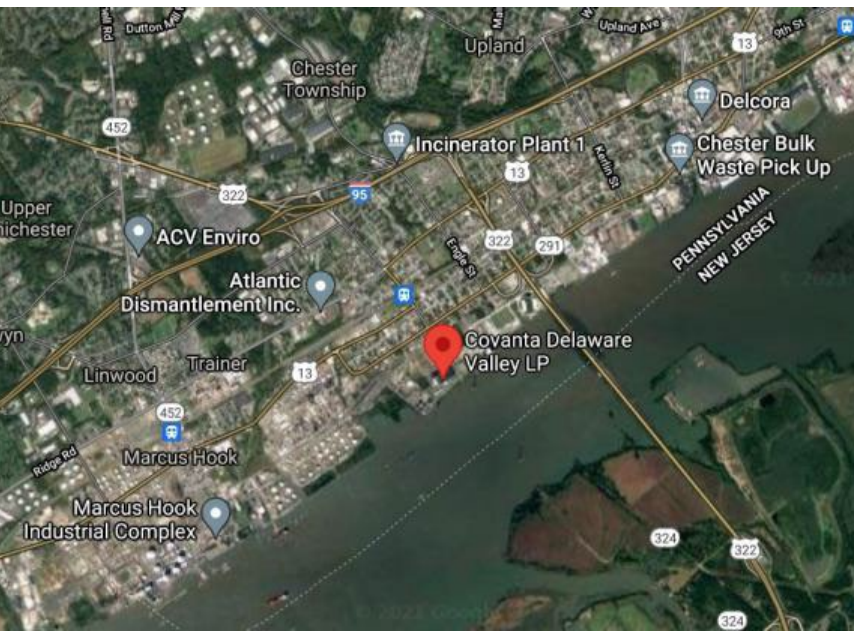
# How many people live near the landfills and incinerators Philly uses?



# Demographics around Reworld incinerator in Chester & Fairless Landfill

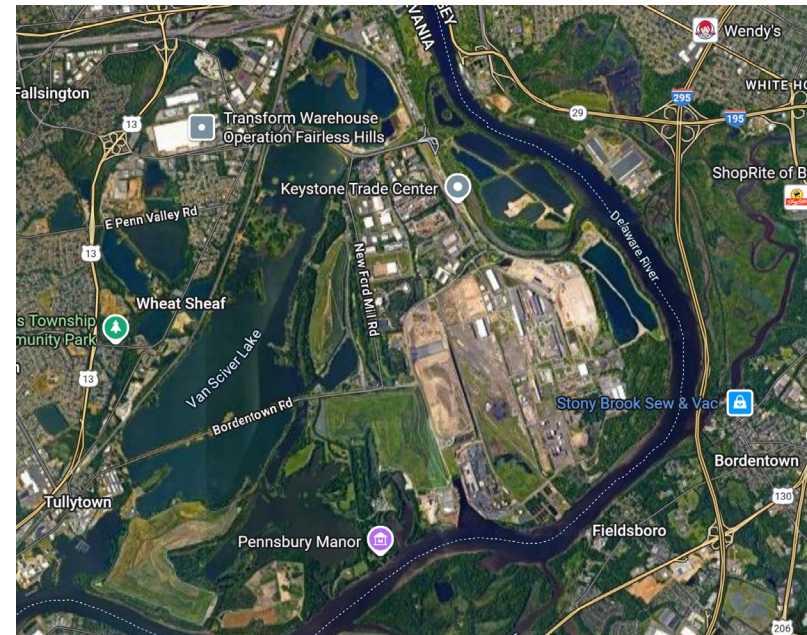
Facility	People living within 2.5 miles	
	Population	% BIPOC
Reworld Delaware Valley incinerator	24,986	78%
Fairless Landfill	105	16%

Census data from [JusticeMap.org](https://www.justicemap.org/)



← Reworld Delaware Valley trash incinerator in Chester

Fairless Landfill in Bucks County →



# Covanta (now “Reworld”) is a Top Air Polluter

Their trash incinerator in Chester is the:

#1 industrial air polluter in Chester City, in Delaware County, and in the entire 7-county region surrounding Philadelphia.

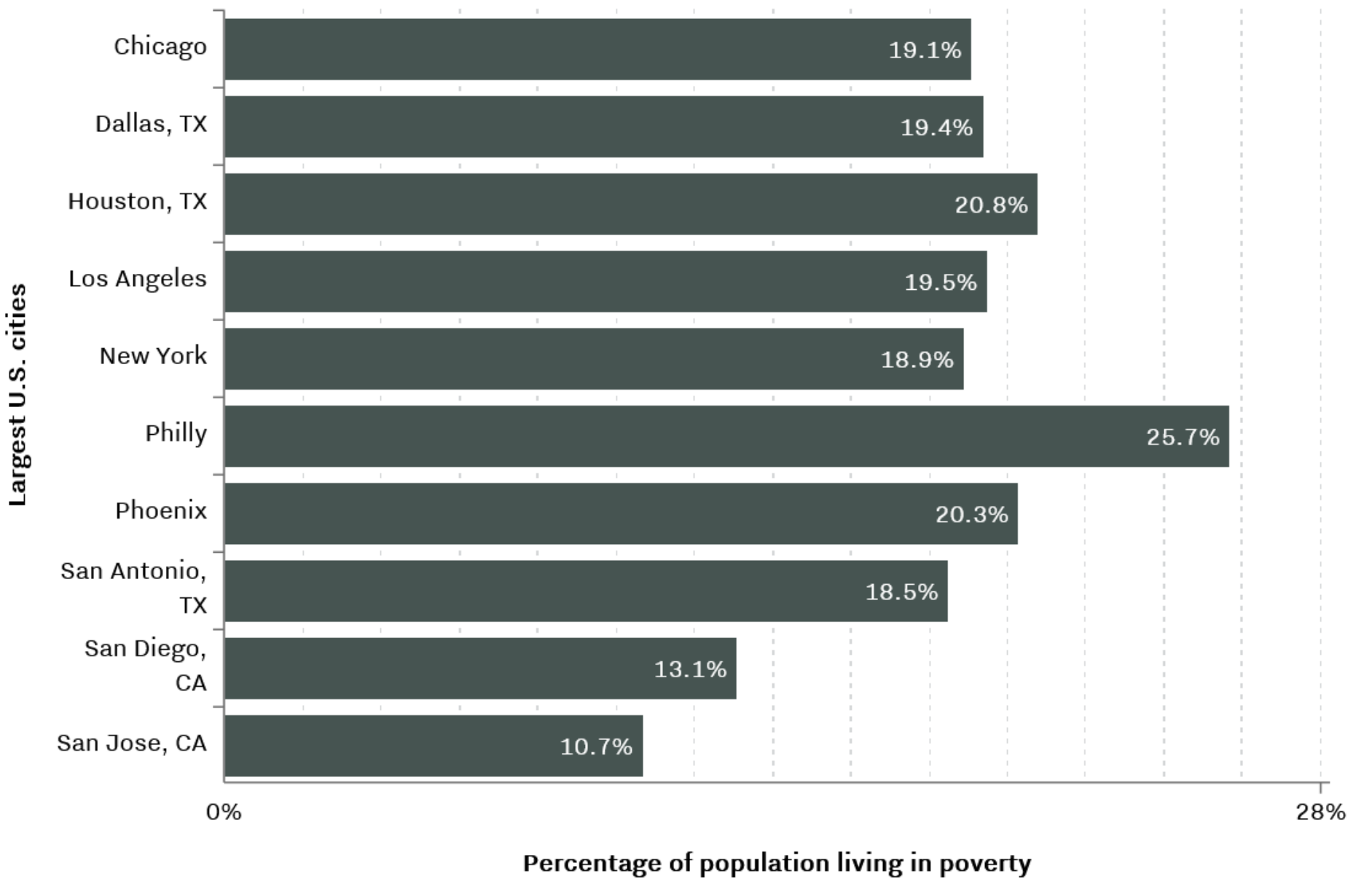
All five trash incinerators in this region are among the region’s top seven industrial air polluters.



Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection Agency Air Emissions Reports:  
[http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/AQ/PBI/Air\\_Emissions\\_Report](http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/AQ/PBI/Air_Emissions_Report)



# Poverty rates in major U.S. cities



# 2024 AsthmaCapitals

The Most Challenging Places  
to Live with Asthma

## Philadelphia Metro Area ranked...

#4 in 2018

#4 in 2019

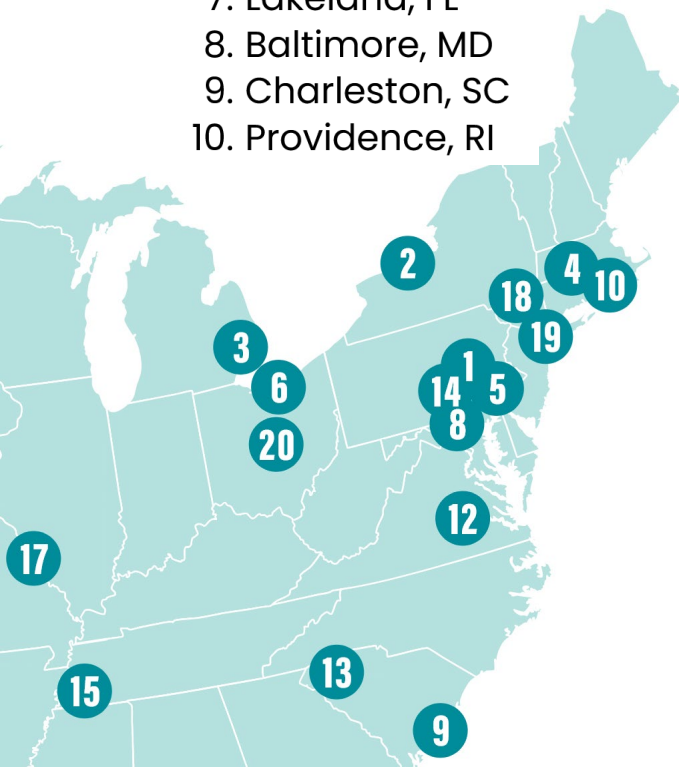
#7 in 2021

#9 in 2022

#8 in 2023

#5 in 2024

1. Allentown, PA
2. Rochester, NY
3. Detroit, MI
4. Springfield, MA
5. Philadelphia, PA
6. Cleveland, OH
7. Lakeland, FL
8. Baltimore, MD
9. Charleston, SC
10. Providence, RI

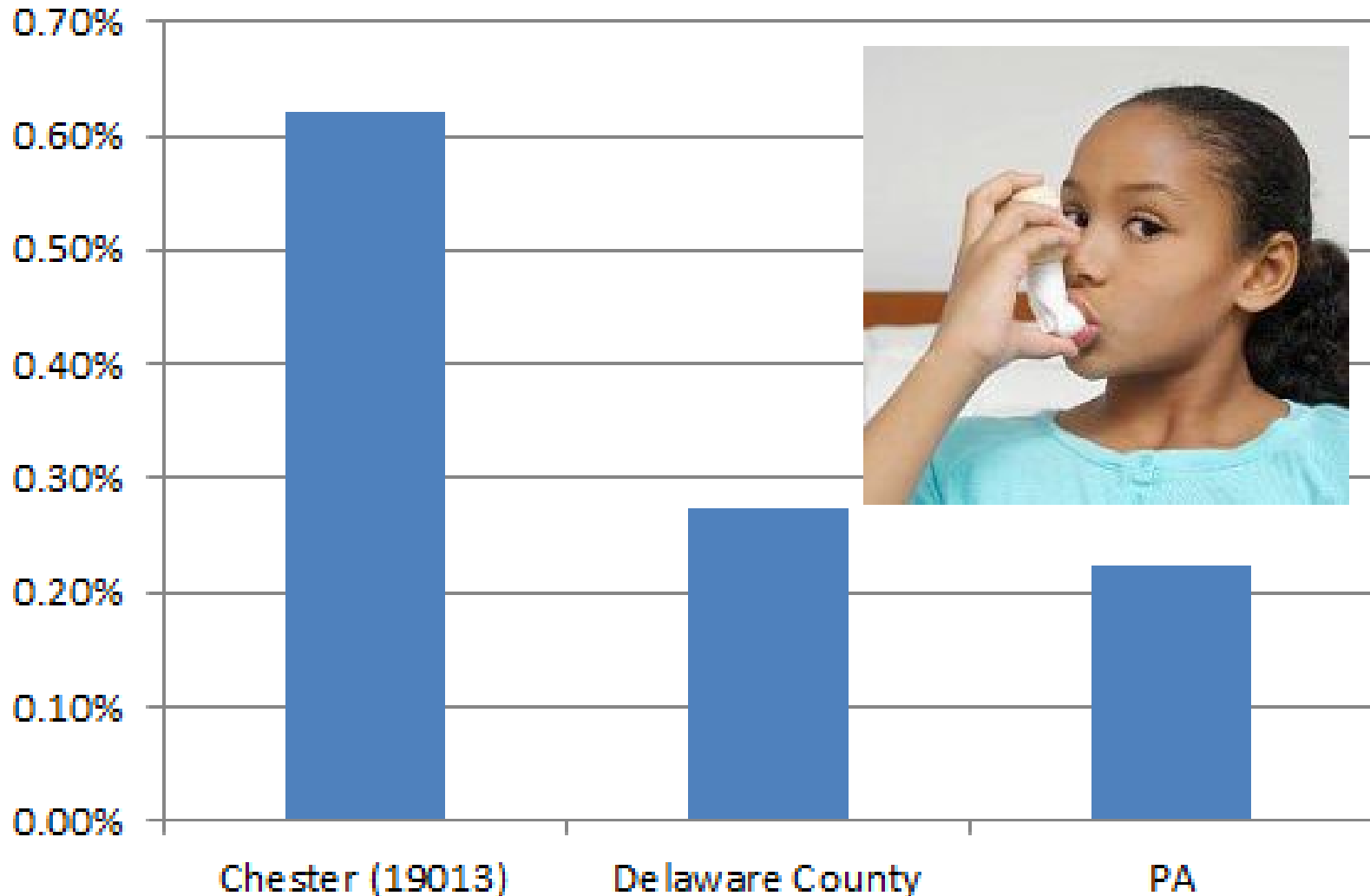


Asthma and Allergy  
Foundation of America

[www.aaafa.org/asthma-capitals/](http://www.aaafa.org/asthma-capitals/)

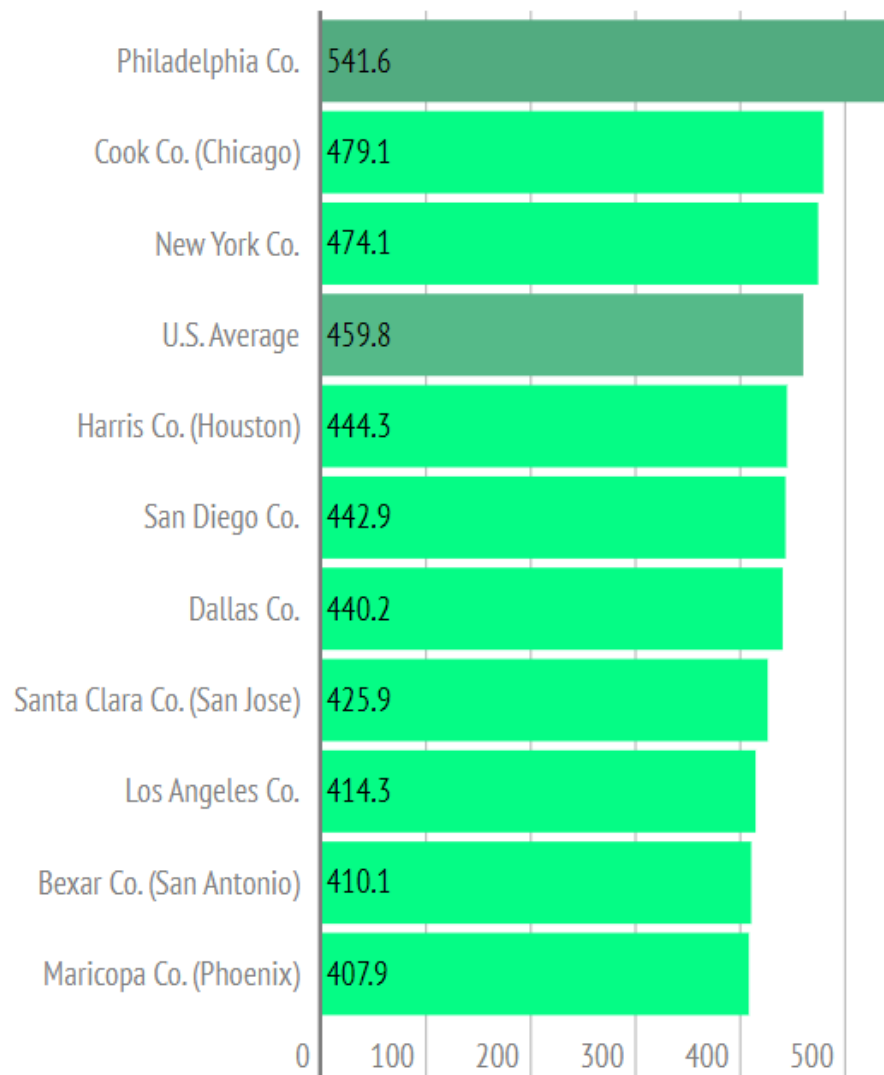
# Childhood asthma hospitalization 3x PA rate

Data for those under 18 years of age, for 2010



Source: Analysis based on 2010 Census data and asthma data from The Asthma Program, PA Department of Health.  
Data provided by Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4).

# America's 10 largest cities by annual cancer rates per 100,000



**Philly is now #2 in cancer incidence among the counties hosting the 10 largest U.S. Cities**

Source: 2007-11 National Cancer Institute

<https://infogram.com/americas-10-largest-cities-by-annual-cancer-rates-per-100000-1g957prn6rndm01>



# Reworld Delaware Valley's Air Emissions

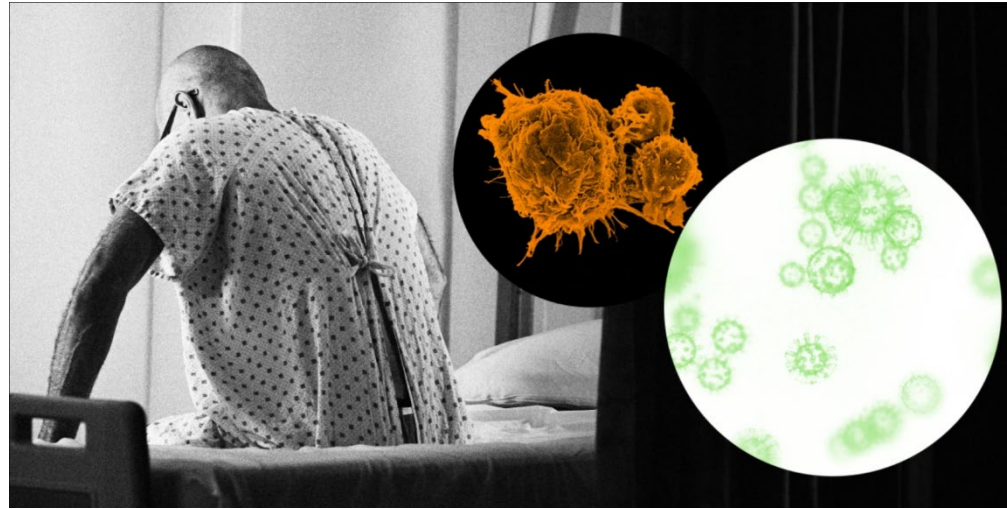
<b>Pollutant</b> (in pounds except CO <sub>2</sub> e)	<b>2022 Emissions*</b>	<b>Rank in DelCo</b>	<b>Health Effects</b>
<b>Global Warming Pollution</b> (in tons of CO <sub>2</sub> equivalents)	914,738	4	Extreme weather, disease, crop damage, species extinction
<b>Nitrogen Oxides</b>	2,320,920	1	Asthma attacks, chronic respiratory disease & stroke
<b>Carbon Monoxide</b>	673,400	1	Headaches, dizziness; increases lifetime risk of heart disease
<b>Sulfur Dioxide</b>	392,820	1	triggers asthma attacks; chronic respiratory and heart diseases; stroke
<b>Particulate Matter</b>	126,080	4	heart attacks, stroke, irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function, difficulty breathing
<b>Hydrochloric Acid</b>	37,740	1	irritates eyes, skin, and nose, damages lungs
<b>Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)</b>	15,140	5	same as above, but worse, gets deep into lungs and into blood stream
<b>Volatile Organic Compounds</b>	13,700	15	eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches, loss of coordination and nausea, liver, kidney and central nervous system damage, cancer
<b>Mercury</b>	51	1	damage to nervous, digestive, & immune systems, lowers IQ
<b>Nickel</b>	20	3	allergy, cardiovascular and kidney diseases, lung fibrosis, lung and nasal cancer
<b>Lead</b>	17	2	damages nervous system and kidneys, lowers IQ, increases likelihood of antisocial behavior
<b>Cadmium</b>	5	2	kidney disease; lung cancer
<b>Arsenic</b>	4	2	lung, skin, bladder, and liver cancers; irritation of skin and mucous membranes; affects brain and nervous system
<b>Chromium (VI)</b>	4	2	lung cancer, shortness of breath, coughing, and wheezing

All is 2022 data except cadmium, arsenic, and chromium (VI), which is 2016-2019 average for lack of 2022 data. Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection Air Emissions Report: [http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/AQ/PBI/Air\\_Emissions\\_Report](http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/AQ/PBI/Air_Emissions_Report)

# Health effects

**People living near incinerators have an increased risk of...**

- **All types of cancer, including:**
  - Stomach
  - Colorectal
  - Liver
  - Renal
  - Lung & pleural
  - Gallbladder
  - Bladder
  - Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
  - Leukemia
  - Soft-tissue sarcoma
- **Respiratory diseases & symptoms**
- **Cardiovascular diseases**
- **Urinary diseases**



**Covanta: “incinerators have been studied comprehensively for health risk”**

**Fact: Not much in the U.S. and not comprehensively at all.**

# Is incineration a problem in general?



[www.EnergyJustice.net/incineration/](http://www.EnergyJustice.net/incineration/) ← find a ton more info here!



# Landfilling vs. Incineration



**...and Ash Landfilling**



# How to Compare?

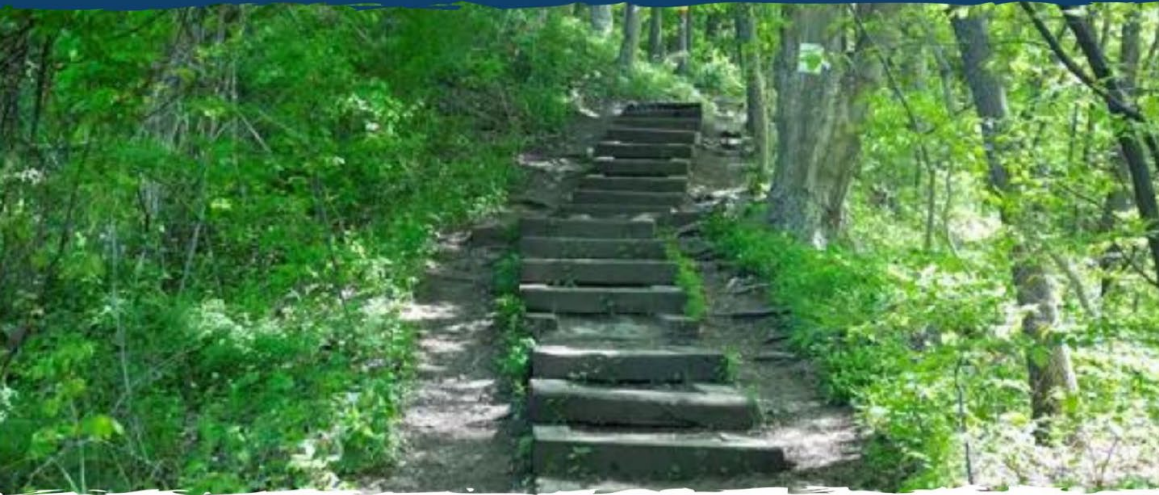
- **Human health impacts**
  - Nitrogen Oxide emissions (asthma)
  - Particulate emissions
  - Toxic and Cancer-causing emissions
- **Eutrophication**
- **Acidification (acid rain...)**
- **Ecosystem toxicity**
- **Ozone depletion**
- **Smog formation**
- **Global warming**

Should also look at...

- **Cost**
- **Jobs**
- **Population impacted**
- **Environmental justice**



# Delaware County's Path Toward Zero Waste



*NPS/Michael Cuff*

Delaware County, Pennsylvania  
Municipal Waste Management Plan 2023-2033  
Non-Substantial Revision

Office of Sustainability  
March 2024



Delaware County, PA is home to the nation's largest waste incinerator, in the City of Chester. It is the largest industrial air polluter in the county, and the county is now moving away from incineration.

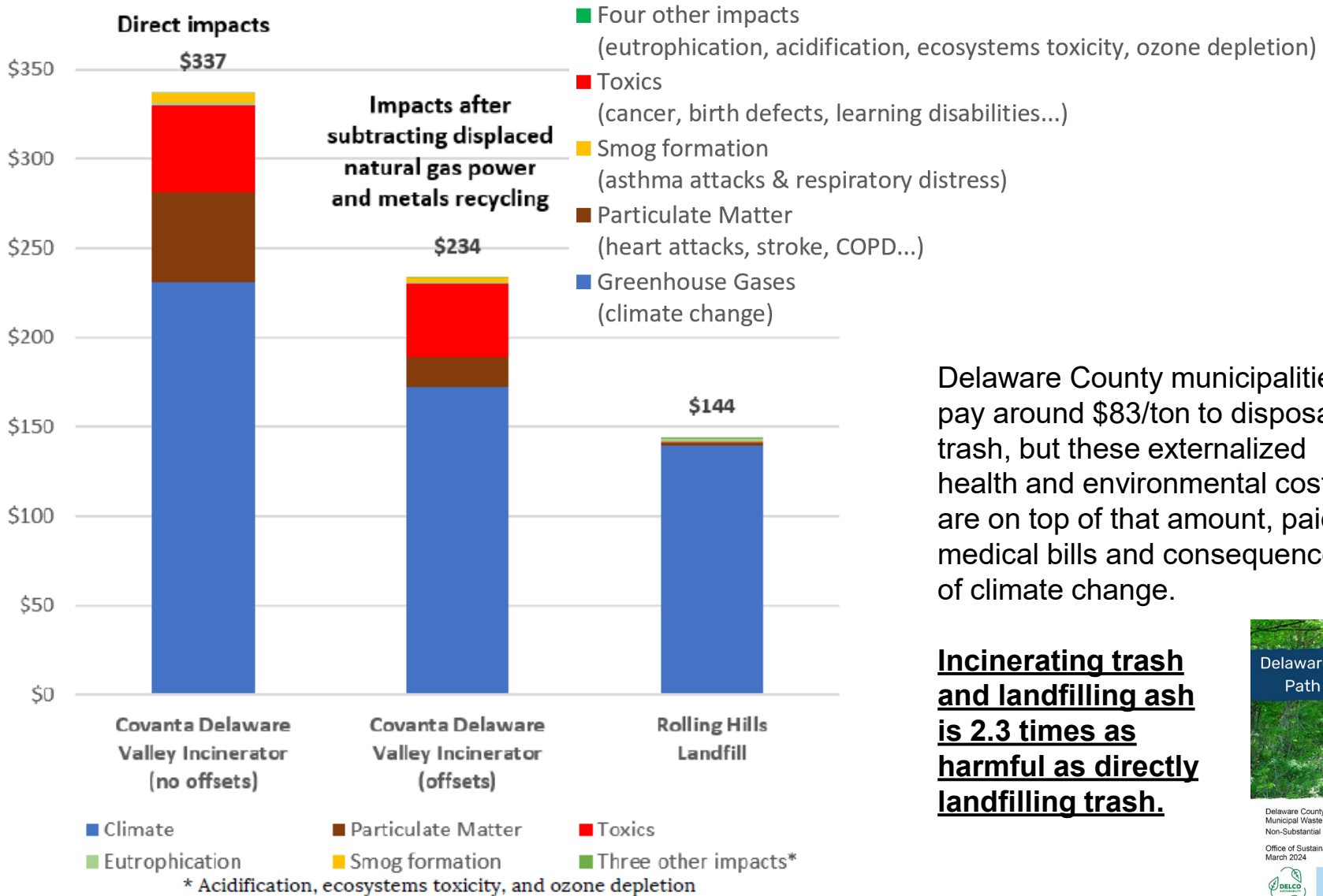
The county's Zero Waste Plan includes a comprehensive life cycle analysis (LCA) of incineration vs. landfilling vs. zero waste.

Find the draft plan [here](#) and the LCA summary and full writeup [here](#).

Results on the next few slides.

# Incineration vs. Landfilling

Health & Environmental Impacts per Ton  
of Waste Disposed at Covanta Delaware Valley Incinerator vs.  
Rolling Hills Landfill



Delaware County municipalities pay around \$83/ton to disposal of trash, but these externalized health and environmental costs are on top of that amount, paid in medical bills and consequences of climate change.

**Incinerating trash and landfilling ash is 2.3 times as harmful as directly landfilling trash.**

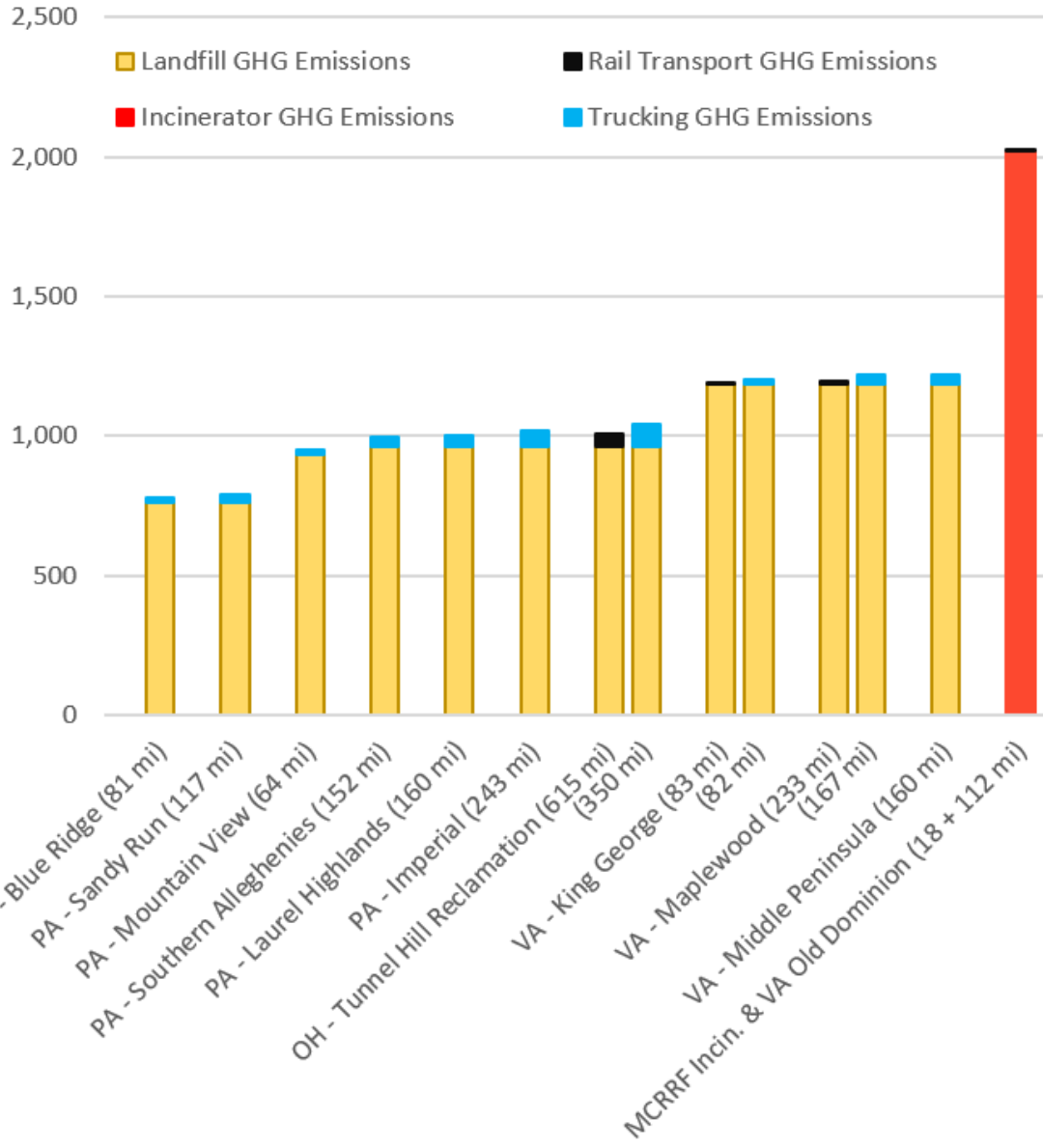


Delaware County, Pennsylvania  
Municipal Waste Management Plan 2023-2033  
Non-Substantial Revision  
Office of Sustainability  
March 2024



# Transportation Impacts Insignificant

## 20-year CO<sub>2</sub>e (lbs/ton of waste disposed)



Transportation climate impacts (blue/black) are minor compared to incineration (red) or landfilling (yellow), and no realistic transportation distance can justify incinerating in-county over hauling waste to distant landfills.

Source: Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) from 2021 report, "Beyond Incineration: Best Waste Management Strategies for Montgomery County, Maryland" [www.energyjustice.net/md/moco](http://www.energyjustice.net/md/moco)

## Beyond Incineration:

Best Waste Management Strategies for Montgomery County, Maryland

Prioritizing:

- Cost-effectiveness
- Human health & safety
- Climate protection
- Continuous waste reduction

Prepared for:

County Executive Marc Elrich

By: Zero Waste Montgomery County

Underwritten by:

Sugarloaf Citizens' Association  
[www.sugarloaforcitizens.org](http://www.sugarloaforcitizens.org)



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March 2021

[www.energyjustice.net/md/beyond.pdf](http://www.energyjustice.net/md/beyond.pdf)

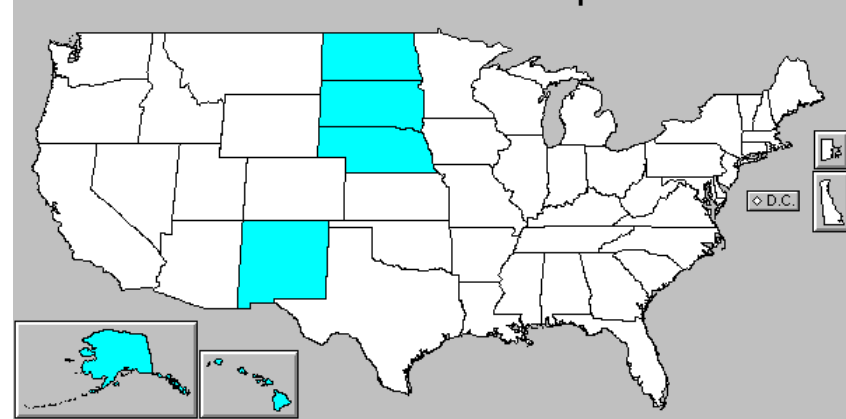




# Where would Philly's waste go if we don't burn it?

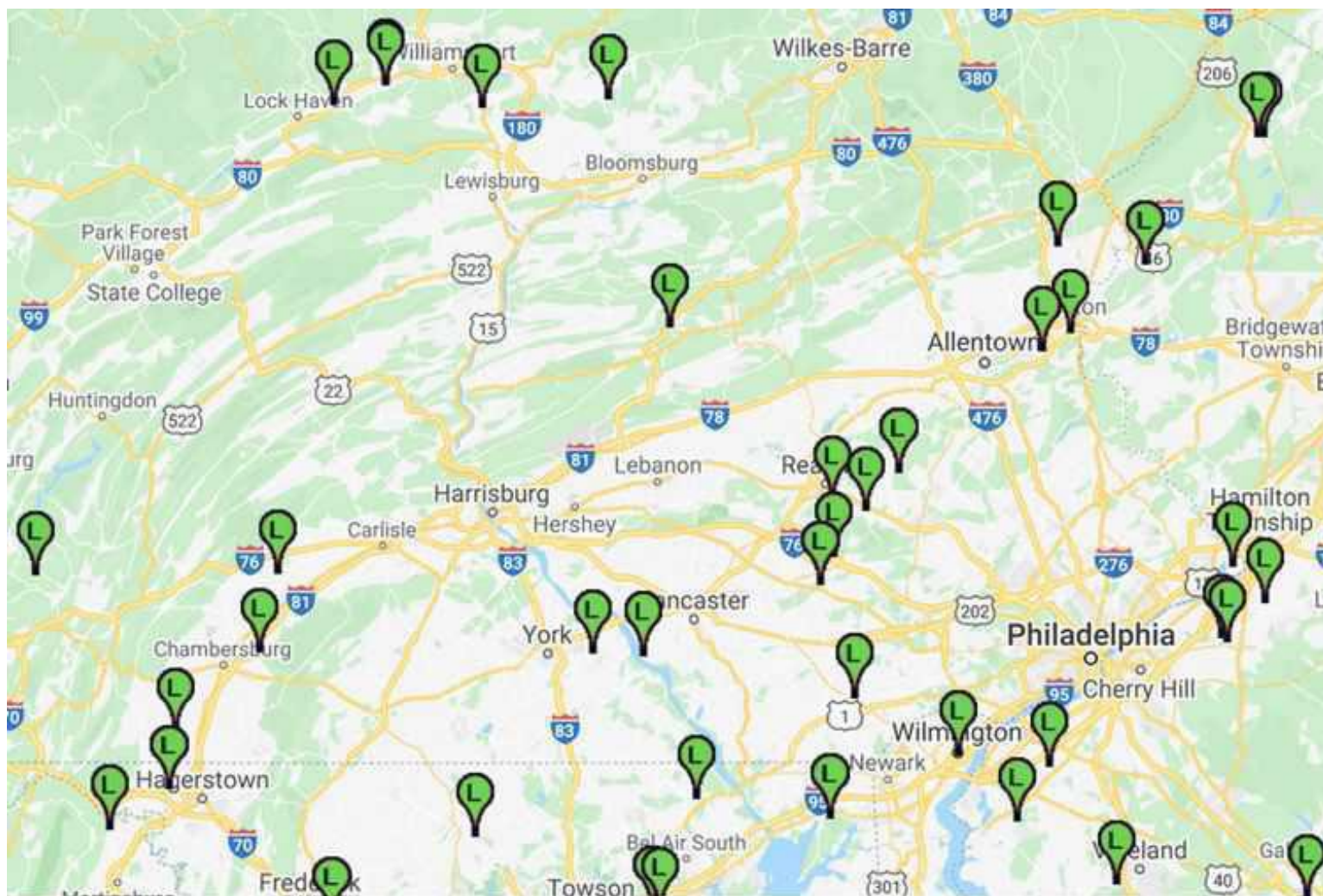
- Pennsylvania has a problem with TOO MUCH landfill space, making the state a magnet for dumping.
- Pennsylvania has been the nation's #1 importer of trash since it was first studied in the early 1990s, accepting trash from 44 states, DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda, and Canada.
- Pennsylvania has 43 landfills and six trash incinerators.

States that have NOT dumped on PA:



Sources: PA Department of Environmental Protection, Municipal Waste Landfills and Resource Recovery Facilities: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/SolidWaste/MunicipalWaste/MunicipalWastePermitting/Pages/MW-Landfills-and-Resource-Recovery-Facilities.aspx>; Solid waste disposal information database: [http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/WM/PBI/Solid\\_Waste\\_Disposal\\_Information](http://cedatareporting.pa.gov/reports/powerbi/Public/DEP/WM/PBI/Solid_Waste_Disposal_Information)  
Congressional Research Service reports on interstate shipment of municipal waste are available at <http://www.actionpa.org/waste/>

# Landfills in our Region



Sources: Energy Justice Communities Map: : <http://www.energyjustice.net/map/jtiny=4782>

PA Department of Environmental Protection, Municipal Waste Landfills and Resource Recovery Facilities:

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/SolidWaste/MunicipalWaste/MunicipalWastePermitting/Pages/MW-Landfills-and-Resource-Recovery-Facilities.aspx>

# Philly's Waste Contracts

Summer 2019:

- Covanta – 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Philly's trash
- Waste Management – 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of Philly's trash

Both contracts are 4 years plus three 1-year renewal options

Approximately the same price.

**Contract expires 6/30/2026**



# City of Philadelphia

**BILL NO. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Introduced \_\_\_\_\_, 2025**

**Councilmember \_\_\_\_\_**

**Referred to the Committee**  
**on \_\_\_\_\_**

## **AN ORDINANCE**

Amending Title 17 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “Contracts and Procurement,” by adding language to bar the City from contracting with companies that cause the city’s municipal solid waste or recyclables to be incinerated; all under certain terms and conditions.

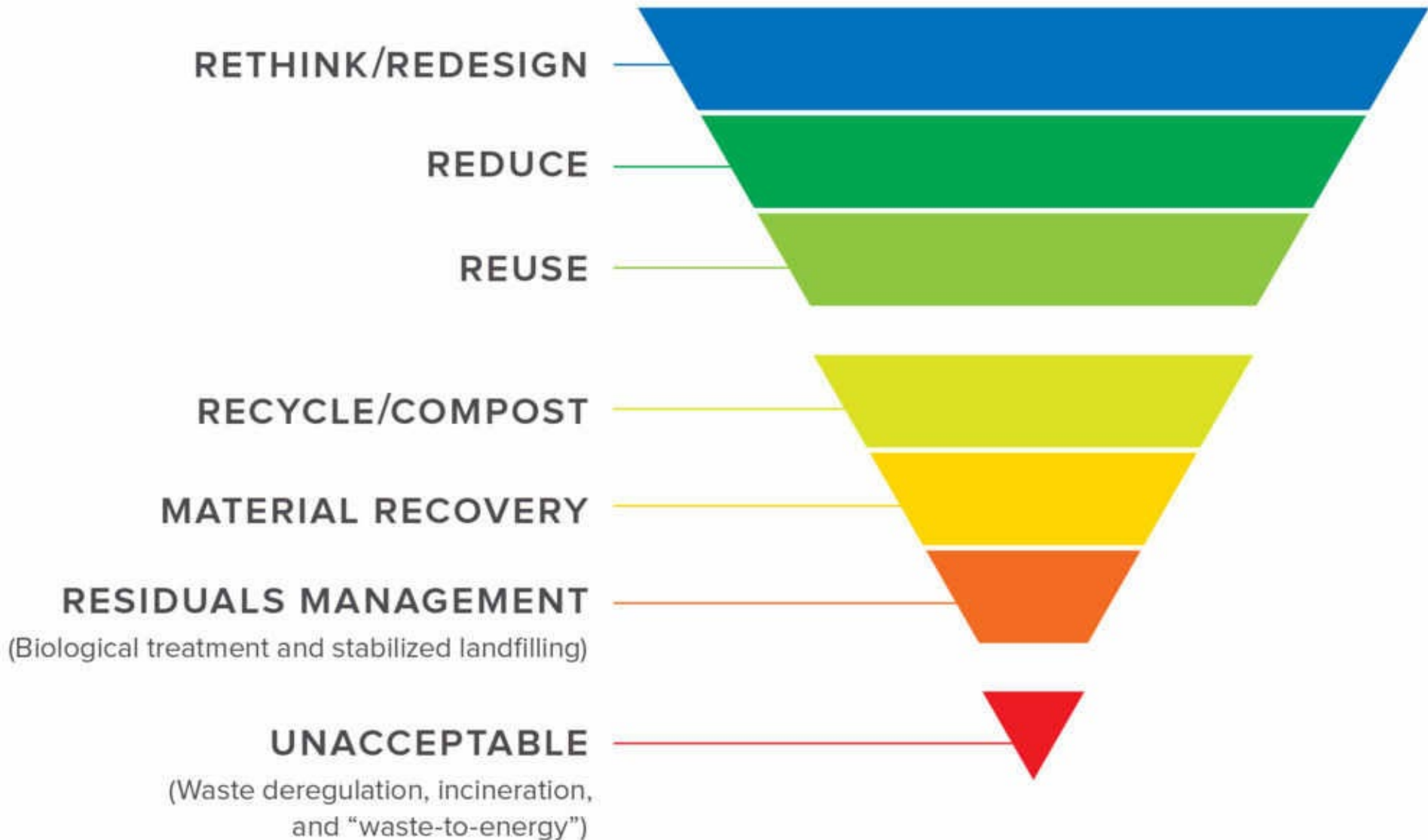
### **Waste Contracting for Clean Air Act**

*THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:*

SECTION 1. Title 17 of The Philadelphia Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

TITLE 17. CONTRACTS AND PROCUREMENT.

# THE ZERO WASTE HIERARCHY





# **Recent History of Philly's use of Trash Incineration:**

2012: Philly signs 7-year contract to burn about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of our trash

2019: Philly does it again, over the opposition of 41 groups

2023: Issue surfaces in primary election mayoral debate with candidate Jeff Brown responding “Chester is Chester” re: burning waste there.

Oct 2023: First city council hearing on Philly burning its trash; Philly residents oppose burning!

2025: Councilmember Gauthier pushing the city on it and brought it up in budget hearings. Department of Sanitation still pro-incinerator, but getting pressure from Office of Sustainability and Councilmember Gauthier. Sanitation saying they can ditch incineration if they can get Republic (2<sup>nd</sup> largest waste hauler) to the table. They claim they're willing to put in environmental criteria in the request for proposals (RFP) for new waste contracts, even if we have to pay a little more to not incinerate, but don't favor banning incineration from the RFP. Request for Information (RFI) in summer got great responses (like [ours](#)!) on zero waste, ending incineration, and interest from Republic.

# [www.PhillyZeroWaste.org/sign](http://www.PhillyZeroWaste.org/sign)

## Sign-on to End Philly Waste Incineration

July \_\_, 2025

Re: Philadelphia Waste Contracts

Dear Mayor Parker:

Philadelphia's Sanitation Department is currently considering new contracts for where our city's trash will go for the next seven years. We write to urge you to instruct the Sanitation Department NOT to award any contracts for burning our trash.

Burning trash and landfilling toxic ash is the most expensive and polluting way to manage waste or to make energy. It's dirtier than coal power plants and is more polluting than landfilling our waste directly without burning it first. For every 100 tons burned, 30 tons end up as toxic ash that still is dumped in landfills, making landfills smaller, but more toxic. The other 70 tons come out of incinerator smokestacks, contributing to air pollution and related health problems.

Since 2019, under our current contracts with Covanta and Waste Management, 39% of the city's trash has been sent to incinerators; the rest to landfills. In 2024, it was just under 37%. All three Pennsylvania incinerators we use – in Delaware, Montgomery, and Bucks Counties – are among the top five industrial air polluters in the five-county Philadelphia area. The top air polluter is the one in Chester, which accepts the lion's share of the trash our city burns.

We are concerned about this incineration contract for several reasons:

Health: the three incinerators surrounding Philadelphia are among the region's four largest emitters of nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollution which triggers asthma attacks. Asthma is a leading cause of missed school and work days, and is a serious problem for our city.

## Signers so far...

Mike Ewall, Esq.  
Executive Director, Energy Justice Network

B. Preston Lyles, Sr., M.S. Higher Ed. Leadership, M.Div.  
Organizer, Delco Environmental Justice

215 People's Alliance  
Beyond Plastics  
ECHO Systems  
McKean County Green Party  
Move Past Plastic  
Philly Thrive  
Physicians for Social Responsibility PA  
Save our Susquehanna  
Sierra Club Southeastern PA Group  
Toxic Prisons Campaign of the Human Rights Coalition  
Zero Waste Strategies LLC  
Zero Waste USA

**Learn more here...**

**[www.PhilllyZeroWaste.org/ContractFAQ.pdf](http://www.PhilllyZeroWaste.org/ContractFAQ.pdf)**

**[www.PhilllyZeroWaste.org](http://www.PhilllyZeroWaste.org)**

**[www.DelcoEJ.org](http://www.DelcoEJ.org)**

**[www.EnergyJustice.net/incineration](http://www.EnergyJustice.net/incineration)**



[www.EnergyJustice.net](http://www.EnergyJustice.net)

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