



LWVRI Testimony in support of House Bill 5166, High Heat Waste Facility Act

Hearing Date: March 12, 2025

House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Honorable Chair Bennett and Members of the Committee:

As Climate Team Chair of the League of Woman Voters of Rhode Island and as a concerned RI resident, I urge you to **support House Bill 5166**, An Act Relating to Health and Safety - HIGH HEAT WASTE FACILITY ACT. This bill provides for a prohibition on the licensing of any new high-heat waste facilities.

High-heat waste facilities create more environmental problems than they attempt to solve. Though built to minimize the problem of overcapacity landfills, they are polluters. They typically burn commercial, residential, and hazardous waste and convert it to other substances. About 25 percent of that waste can become residual ash and wastewater sludge. This residue contains heavy metals and toxic compounds (like dioxin) which are toxic for generations. And landfilling or disposal are still required. When landfills break down, the sludge and pollutants seep into the groundwater and nearby waterways.

Though newer high-heat waste facilities have air filters to capture these pollutants, they don't eliminate the pollution. Fly ash, the lighter by-product from this high-heat process, can escape through the stacks in the incineration or high-heat process. These air-borne particulates inflict serious health problems upon the communities where these facilities are built. Too often these structures are built in or next to poorer communities, typically communities of color. This is truly an environmental injustice.

RI Communities, especially those where high-heat waste plants are built or proposed to be built, should not have to bear the health costs and problems related to these facilities. New, high-heat plants should not be allowed as well because they add to the significant pollution problems Rhode Islanders already face. Permitting such facilities allows us to believe we are solving waste reduction and landfill problems. But these short-term solutions are problematic and temporary. Instead, we need to focus on Zero Waste practices and cleaner solutions. High-heat waste facilities are not the answer.

The RI League of Women Voters urges you and the entire committee to support the passage of H 5166. A cleaner, safer environment is what all Rhode Islanders deserve.

Thank you,

Diana (Donnie) McGee

Diana (Donnie) McGee, LWVRI Climate Team Chair

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