

Lou Mansolillo

From: Beth Ferguson <eoferg@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 11:51 AM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: Testimony for Bill 5923

Dear Representative Bennett, Representative Phillips, Representative O'Brien and the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources members,

My name is Elizabeth Ferguson and I am a resident of East Greenwich, a registered nurse and most importantly, a mother of four young children. I am writing to you in support of Bill 5923.

High-heat waste processing facilities have no place in Rhode Island. We have a long-standing policy against incineration, but there are supposedly "new" technologies being introduced as "clean", "green", and "renewable", when they are, in fact, just slightly altered versions of incinerators with the same toxic byproducts.

Pyrolysis is an example of one of these technologies. Proponents of pyrolysis as a means of waste disposal want to distinguish the process from incineration because of its lack of oxygen during burning. The reality is that there is still combustion with pyrolysis, it's just at a separate step, which is often completely omitted from the explanation of the technology by the said proponents. I care deeply about this issue because a pyrolysis facility is currently being built by an out-of-state insolvent company in West Warwick, less than 1/2 mile from my home. I am terrified of the known carcinogenic pollutants that will threaten the health of my family.

The introduction of a high-heat waste processing facility to any part of Rhode Island would be detrimental to that community. People would move, businesses would close, home values then property taxes would plummet and schools would fail. No one would choose to live anywhere near an odorous and dangerous facility. "Little Rhody" is small, even one facility would impact us all.

I have researched this thoroughly. Burning waste releases heavy metals and poisonous compounds that are known to cause cancer, organ damage, infertility and birth defects. Renaming technology and using environmentally-friendly buzzwords do not protect us from these health risks. Peer-reviewed studies on pyrolysis and medical waste simply do not exist. The science is not there to definitively claim that high-heat waste processing is safe for the environment let alone people. If it is not proven to be safe, it should not be allowed in our state. Please pass this bill so that we can take a step toward protecting the people of Rhode Island and preventing the Ocean State from becoming a wasteland.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ferguson
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East Greenwich, RI 02818