



Maryland General Assembly Testimony
SB 0146 / HB 0166
Position: Favorable

My name is Dante Swinton, and I am the founder and executive director of Our Zero Waste Future Incorporated. Our mission is to promote awareness on the value of discarded materials by encouraging zero waste behaviors and facilitating thriving communities through cooperative business development. We are in favor of SB 0146 / HB 0166. I have lived in Baltimore since 2014, and I have witnessed the growing disapproval of our trash incinerator - from its host neighborhood of Westport, to residents across the city and region.

First, it is impossible to discuss the continuation or discontinuation of incinerator subsidies without also discussing the impact of the facility on surrounding communities. Identifying incineration as a renewable energy, and thereby providing it with millions of dollars in credits, does not make any sense. This maintains a serial polluter on the same level as wind and solar technologies. Neither wind nor solar power would be active polluters like WIN Waste Baltimore - formerly Wheelabrator Baltimore, and also known as BRESKO - is to the Baltimore community. **The facility is Baltimore City's largest stationary air polluter by far, accounting for 13% of methane emissions, 33% of toxic air emissions, and an incredible 48% of carbon emissions¹.** Image 1 ranks WIN Waste against other stationary polluters in Baltimore City on a number of pollutants.

Every year this proposal emerges, proponents of incineration will state either that WIN Waste and Covanta are "in compliance" with emissions regulations, or that the emissions are negligible compared to vehicles. It is important to recognize two things. One, "compliance" *is not* the same thing as safety, as even short-term exposure to nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter can increase the lifetime risk of cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, and stroke². Two, incinerator emissions *are not* negligible, as expressed in image 2. WIN Waste, for example, emits the same amount of carbon dioxide as ~141,000 cars each driving 11,500 miles in a year. It also produces enough nitrogen oxides to equal ~127,000 cars each driving 11,500 miles in a year. This is not insignificant pollution, and it is crucial members of the Maryland General Assembly understand this as part of the discussion. Choosing to maintain incinerators as "renewable" energy is both an environmental and economic detriment to Baltimoreans and beyond.

¹ EPA National Emissions Inventory.

<https://www.epa.gov/air-emissions-inventories/2020-national-emissions-inventory-nei-data>

² British Medical Journal. Short-term exposure to air pollution and stroke: systematic review and meta-analysis. <https://www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h1295>

The EPA recognizes that *at least 75%* of our discards are reusable, recyclable, or compostable³. Image 3 provides the rough makeup of the waste sent to BRESKO from within Baltimore City, based on EPA figures.

The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation supports a transition to a zero waste economy, stating in its Beyond 34 report that even a 70% diversion rate would unlock *\$4.5 trillion* for the national economy by 2030, and that it “could be the biggest economic revolution”⁴ of our country’s history. We can acknowledge the US Chamber of Commerce would not declare itself as some sort of liberal or “woke” bastion, so the call for a transition to a zero waste economy is universal, regardless if you are a Republican, Democrat, or independent.

Indeed, communities across the country are recognizing the value diverting materials out of incinerators and landfills can bring. We can look to Charlotte’s zero waste report, Circular Charlotte, where their vision is to bring zero waste jobs to communities of color and low income communities that have been left behind during the city’s growth over the last few decades. The difference in job creation between waste management methods could not be more stark. For every 10,000 tons of material incinerated, you create *one* job. Appropriately, WIN Waste has about 70 employees for the ~725,000 tons of trash it burns annually. And for every 10,000 tons of material landfilled, 4-6 jobs are created. But things begin to shift with recycling, which produces 36 jobs per 10,000 tons of material. Reuse and remanufacturing, however, produces *300* jobs per 10,000 tons of material managed⁵. Image 4 provides these numbers in a graph. Those jobs numbers *cannot* be produced if we continue to use trash incinerators and provide them subsidies in Maryland, as these facilities *cannot* turn any sort of profit without claiming most of the municipal solid waste stream.

The materials incinerated have significant value in the secondary market. Image 5 shows the value per ton of some of the most common materials recycled as of January 2024 in the northeast. This ranges from \$92.50 per ton of corrugated cardboard, to \$1,210/ton of aluminum cans⁶. Currently, Baltimore sends its recyclables to Recycle America in Elkridge, and pays a tipping fee. This means the city is not garnering any value from the recyclables sold to secondary markets, and is literally burning money with the balance of waste sent to BRESKO - in addition to the tipping fees it wastes with the incinerator.

I urge members of the State Senate and House to make this the year incineration is finally removed from our Renewable Portfolio Standard. Legislators identifying as conservatives often consider themselves as “fiscally responsible,” and those identifying as liberals typically express

³ EPA. Advancing Sustainable Materials Management.

<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/advancing-sustainable-materials-management>

⁴ US Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Beyond 34: Recycling and Recovery for a New Economy. https://chamber-foundation.files.svdcdn.com/production/documents/B34CaseStudy_Layout_June20.pdf?dm=1694110497

⁵ City of Charlotte. Circular Charlotte: Towards a zero waste and inclusive city. <https://www.metabolic.nl/publications/circular-charlotte-pdf/>

⁶ RecyclingMarkets.net. Secondary materials pricing. <https://recyclingmarkets.net/secondarymaterials/index.html>

some level of concern for our environment. Removing incineration from Tier 1 of the RPS allows for both stances to win. **A favorable, bipartisan decision will help move Maryland into the 21st century, unlocking an economic revolution.**

Please reach out if you have any questions.

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HOW WIN WASTE RANKS AMONG OTHER STATIONARY POLLUTERS IN BALTIMORE CITY

1

CARBON DIOXIDE

- >1 billion lbs. annually*
- American Sugar - 240 mil. lbs.
 - Johns Hopkins Hospital - 210 mil. lbs.

1

LEAD

- ~400 lbs. annually*
- Pier 7 - 20 lbs.
 - UM Baltimore - 1 lb.

2

METHANE

- ~510,000 lbs. annually*
- Quarantine Road Landfill - 3 mil. lbs.
 - Johns Hopkins Hospital - 12,000 lbs.

1

MERCURY

- ~90 lbs. annually*
- US Gypsum - 40 lbs.
 - Kaydon Ring - < 1 lb.

1

NITROGEN OXIDES

- ~2 million lbs. annually*
- American Sugar - 270,000 lbs.
 - Vicinity - 259,000 lbs.

4

PARTICULATE MATTER 2.5

- ~18,600 lbs. annually*
- W.R. Grace - 219,500 lbs.
 - Gold Bond - 35,000 lbs.

1

SULFUR DIOXIDE

- 575,000 lbs. annually*
- Gold Bond - 18,000 lbs.
 - Buckeye Terminals- 17,000 lbs.

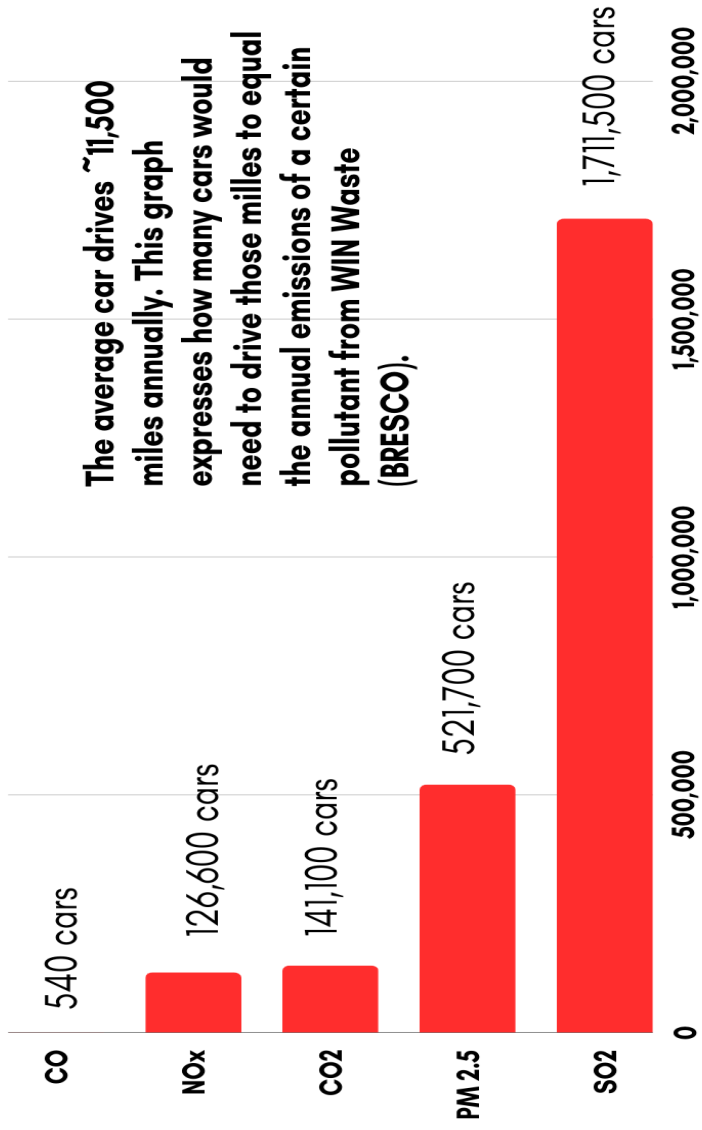
2

FORMALDEHYDE

- ~3,900 lbs. annually*
- Gold Bond - 5,600 lbs.
 - US Gypsum - 2,900 lbs.



But just how dirty is WIN Waste Baltimore (BRESCO)?

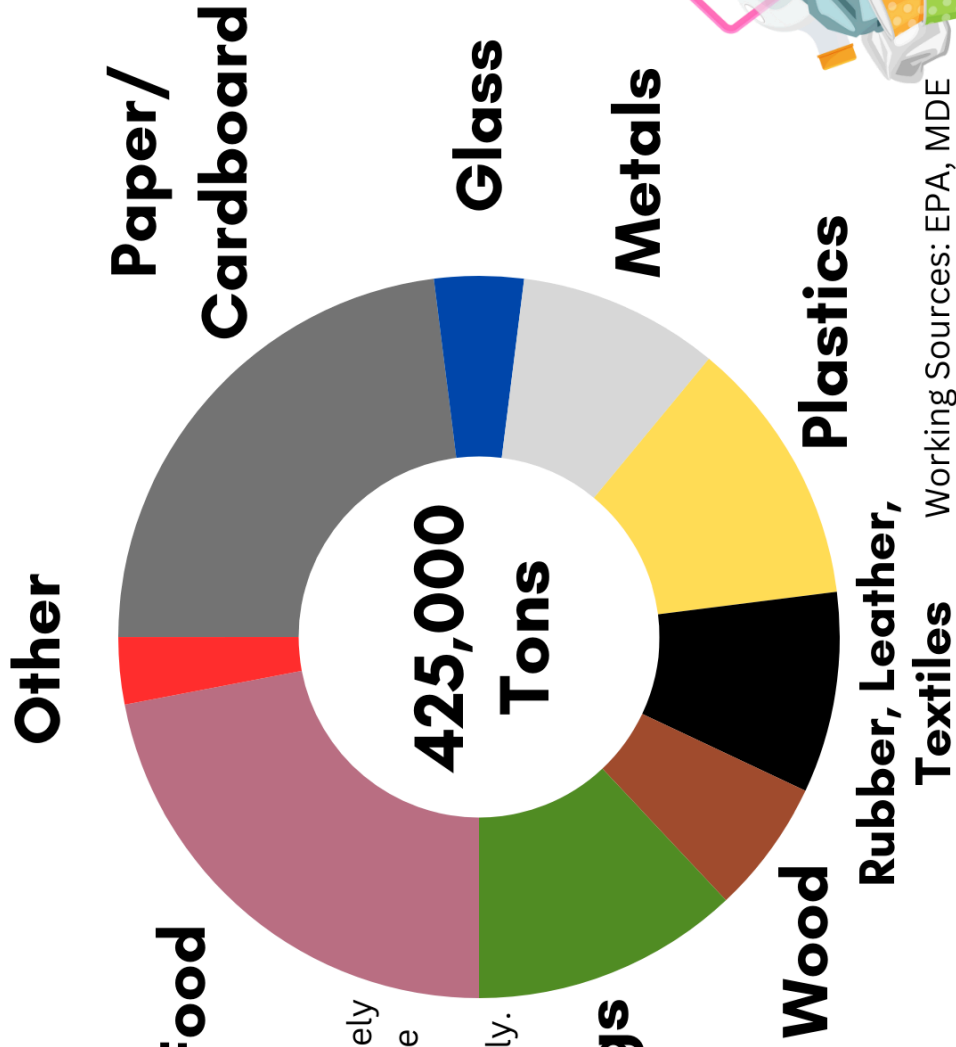


Sources for calculations: EPA, EPA National Emissions Inventory

So what's in the trash?

Baltimore send approximately 425,000 tons of trash to the incinerator through public and private sources annually.

Yard Trimmings



Working Sources: EPA, MDE

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

Jobs per 10,000 Tons of Material Processed

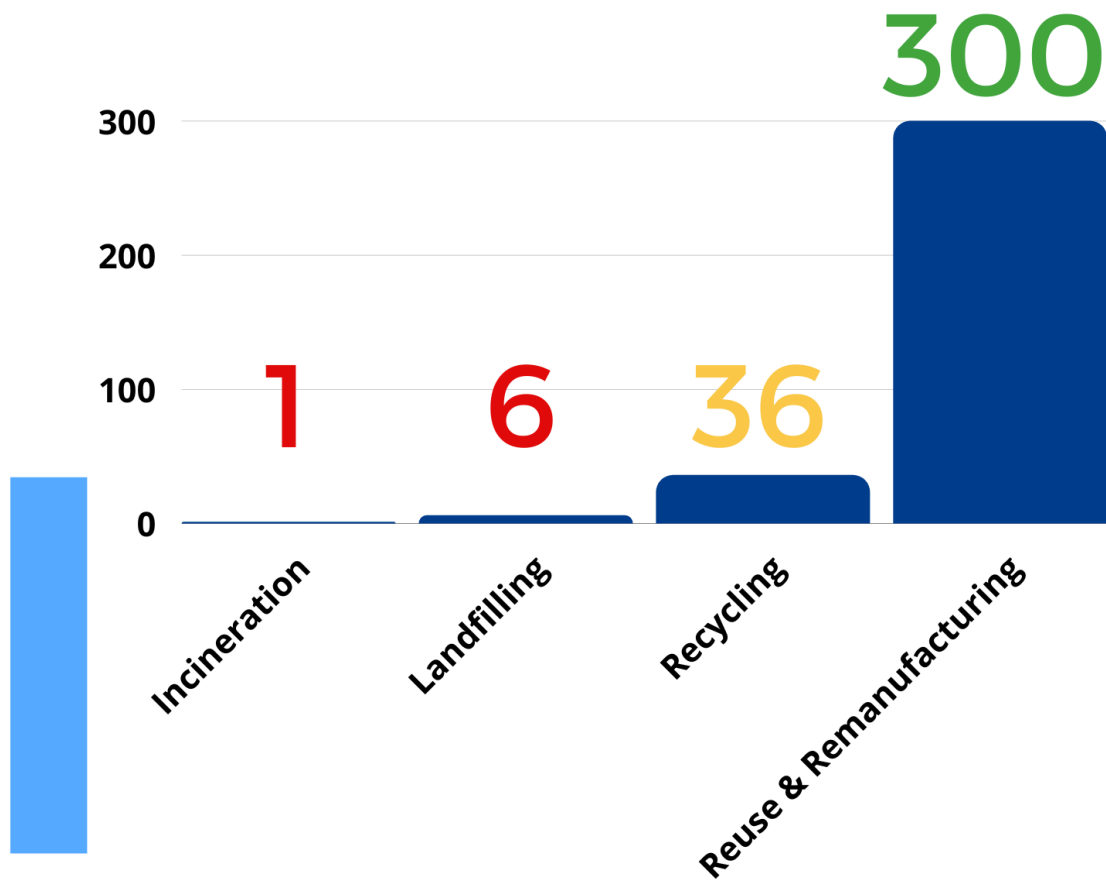
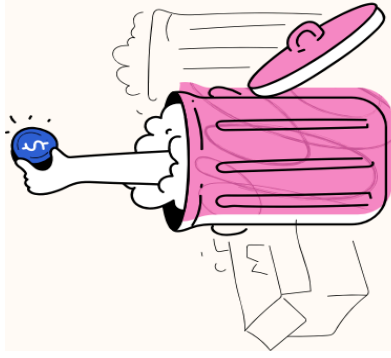


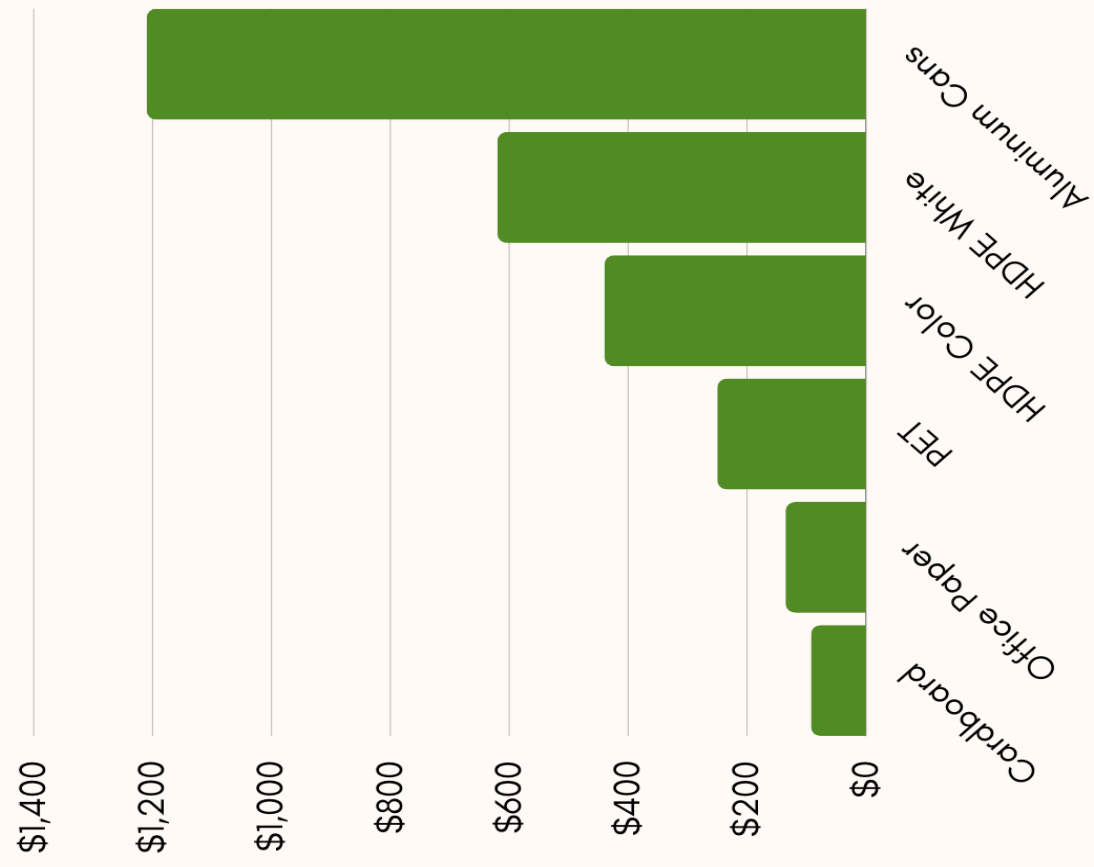
Image 2. Job creation per 10,000 tons of materials processed. Sources: Circular Charlotte, EPA, Institute for Local Self-Reliance



TRASH INTO TREASURE

The stuff we throw away could make us money

Material values per ton in the northeast, as of January 2024



Source: recyclingmarkets.net/secondarymaterials