

## **Nothing to fear, and much to gain, from waste-to-energy**

Schenectady is one of those misguided cities that sends its municipal solid wastes to distant landfills, costing much money, wasting valuable energy and increasing global warming and pollution of our environment.

Waste-to-energy (WTE) is safe. I advised the Israel Ministry of the Environment on this matter earlier this year. And recently I was in Detroit, similarly telling its public officials that WTE with modern, multi-stage air pollution controls is safe and has negligible health risks, compared to diesel trucks that transfer municipal solid wastes to landfills, whose emissions pose urban health risks hundreds of times higher.

Some argue about zero wastes and full recycling, a future goal that we won't see in our lifetimes. Europe has recycling rates of about 70 percent, and extensively uses WTE to attain their goal of zero wastes to polluting landfills, which are being closed, and that have greenhouse gas, global warming emissions many times that of WTE facilities. They will soon be building about 100 additional WTE plants in Europe.

We should follow the new solid waste disposal policies of our northern neighbor, Quebec, which is adopting a policy of zero waste to landfills, including WTE systems that recover valuable energy from our wastes. Every ton of municipal solid wastes has the energy of a barrel of oil. We need to have WTE to reduce our reliance on imported fuels, and to preserve our environment.

I also previously told the Israelis to look at WTE solutions in the European Union, Japan and progressive states like Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, etc. not New York, where new WTE plants are not allowed by our misguided state administration.

See the WTERT [Waste-to-energy Research and Technology council] Web site [www.seas.columbia.edu/earth/wtert/](http://www.seas.columbia.edu/earth/wtert/) and the articles "Waste Not," and "Environmental Movement Has Lost Its Way," by Dr. Patrick Moore, co-founder and former leader of Greenpeace. We have to base our solid waste policies on good science and technology, not on fear, emotion and false idealism.

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