Analysis of 181 written comments sent to the New York Times web discussion article "Should the U.S. Burn or Bury Its Trash?" of April 13 [link] by Marc W. Langenohl of Columbia University's Earth Engineering Center

Out of 181 comments, 104 comments (57%) supported WtE. Another 43 comments (24%) opposed WtE. Finally, 34 comments (19%) of the comments were unclear or not addressed to the subject of the discussion.

Opposing comments came in a few forms;

- Some cited other types of plants that polluted and assumed WtE plants are the same.
- Most were in the form of Reduce/Reuse/Recycle and Compost ONLY, but did not supply an option for the waste that cannot be Reused/Recycled or Composted AND said that WtE will take away from these other options. Also that because of the nature of the plant, if there is not enough garbage going to the plant they will start to take in recyclable as well as non-recyclable waste.
- Some supplied other alternatives to managing post-recycling wastes, e.g., Anaerobic Digesters.
- Some stated that Waste-to-Energy was inefficient as compared landfill gas energy recovery.
- Some believed that WTE plants still produced toxic emissions and what is being fed to the plant determines how bad the emissions will be.
- Some said that WTE plants could not be trusted to not combust recycled goods, or ship electronics to other countries for landfill disposal, and that money is the end of all means.
- A lot of advocates were for Zero-Waste.
- Some copy/pasted from anti WtE sites.
- Some believe that WTE plants burn trees as well.
- Some assume that if we incinerate all our waste there will be no more resources left at the end, as compared to recycling (believing that WTE = NO recycling).
- Some condemned WTE plants for taking all the money out of the city/district to construct and operate the plant

There were also 34 unclear comments (19%). They consisted of comments that were either not on topic, or did not provide an opinion as to whether they were for or against WTE. Examples are;

- A lot commented on how suppliers inefficiently package their products, saying that there is usually more packaging than product, causing more waste than necessary.
- People commented on the suppliers’ lack of recycling information on most products and lack of instructions on how to recycle the product.
- Commenters disliked the name of the Editorial article saying it was misleading. “Should the U.S. Burn or Bury Its Trash?” was the title of the article. They commented that there are more than two options available to fix the waste problem here in America, Waste-to-Energy, Landfilling, Recycling, Reusing, Reducing, Composting, etc.
- Some people were bashing America for lacking so far behind our European counterparts, or bashing America for being a greedy, corporate country that stops all progress forward when companies are profiting on old/bad tech (saying that large corporations run America, not the government).
- Some said the U. S. Government should control/monitor waste, give more incentives for people to recycle, subsidize WTE Plants, charge people for producing too much waste, etc.