

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 3, 2023

Contact:

Mike Ewall

Energy Justice Network

215-436-9511

mike@energyjustice.net

Tim Whitehouse

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

202-247-0299

twhitehouse@peer.org

WASTE INCINERATORS' TOXIC OUTPUT SHOULD BE REPORTED

Incinerator Chemical Releases Not Included in EPA Toxics Release Inventory

Washington, DC — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should finally start requiring waste incinerators to report their toxic chemical emissions to the agency's Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), according to a rulemaking petition filed today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) and the Energy Justice Network, with backing from more than 300 other environmental and public health organizations. Toxic emissions from waste incinerators are currently not catalogued in the TRI even though they are quite substantial.

The TRI rulemaking petition would cover incinerators that burn municipal solid waste (household and commercial trash), industrial waste, medical waste, and sewage sludge, as well as pyrolysis and gasification units, altogether approximately 400 facilities nationwide. The petition requires a formal response and addresses one of several demands that 274 groups made of the White House in a [letter](#) raising concerns about EPA's history of favoring waste incineration. That October 2022 letter was never answered or acknowledged.

Toxic heavy metals, such as lead and mercury burned in incinerators are not destroyed but end up discharged in the air and in the resulting ash. Incineration also does not destroy many toxic chemicals, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which also end up in the air and ash, ultimately contaminating lands and waters. In still other cases, such as burning vinyl chloride (used in PVC plastic), incineration creates even more toxic variants, such as dioxins and furans, the most toxic class of chemicals known to science.

The petition also includes controversial pyrolysis and gasification units that are promoted as "chemical recycling" or "advanced recycling," yet are classified by EPA as types of incinerators. These facilities heat wastes, usually plastics, in attempts to create a fuel

product. While touted as a way to create clean energy from plastics, one of these new EPA-approved fuels carries an astronomical cancer risk of 1 in every 4 persons exposed, nearly 250,000 times the level EPA considers safe.

“This petition would close a big data gap about our exposure to harmful chemicals,” stated PEER Executive Director Tim Whitehouse, a former EPA enforcement attorney, noting that reporting to the TRI would provide the first disclosure of toxic chemicals in incinerator ash, which usually ends up in landfills. “Incinerator ash is full of toxic chemicals, and when used in place of soil to cover landfills at night, can blow into communities.”

The Toxics Release Inventory currently contains detailed information on 770 chemicals in 33 categories managed by more than 23,000 industries. The TRI was created as part of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act, enacted back in 1986.

EPA has the legal authority to add incinerators to the TRI, but has not done so despite clear environmental justice implications, as trash, sewage sludge, and medical waste incinerators disproportionately impact people of color.

“Waste incinerators are typically among the largest industrial air polluters in their cities and counties, yet this info is invisible in this popular disclosure tool,” added Mike Ewall, Executive Director of the Energy Justice Network, a national organization supporting communities to prevent and close waste incinerators and other polluting industries. “Our research has shown that this unnecessary industry is worse than landfilling, is dirtier than coal burning, and disproportionately impacts people of color.”

###

Read the petition or view the signatories at www.energyjustice.net/tri

313 Organizations [signed on](#) in support:

1. [1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations](#) (CA)
2. [350 Fairfax](#) (VA)
3. [350 Hawaii](#) (HI)
4. [350 New Hampshire](#) (NH)
5. [350 Salem](#) (OR)
6. Abell and Charles Village Mutual Aid (MD)
7. Action Collaborative for the Transforming Spirit Now (ACTS Now) (NH)

8. [Afro-Vegan Society](#) (MD)
9. [All Our Energy](#) (NY)
10. [All Together Now PA](#) (PA)
11. [Alliance for A Clean Environment \(ACE\)](#) (PA)
12. [Alliance for a Green Economy](#) (NY)
13. Alliance for Health and the Environment (MA)
14. [Alliance for Regional Cooperation](#) (DC)
15. [Alliance for Sustainable Communities–Lehigh Valley](#) (NJ)
16. [Alliance for the Wild Rockies](#) (MT)
17. [Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments \(ANHE\)](#) (MD)
18. ANC 5D02 (DC)
19. Ashford Clean Energy Task Force (CT)
20. [Assateague Coastal Trust](#) (MD)
21. [Athens County's Future Action Network](#) (OH)
22. [Balaboste](#) (NY)
23. [Baltimore Compost Collective Program](#) (MD)
24. [Ban Michigan Fracking](#) (MI)
25. [Bay Area - System Change, Not Climate Change](#) (CA)
26. [Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community](#) (PA)
27. Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group (MD)
28. [Berks Gas Truth](#) (PA)
29. [Better Path Coalition](#) (PA)
30. [Between the Waters](#) (OH)
31. [Beyond Extreme Energy](#) (MD)
32. Beyond Plastics Altamont (NY)
33. [Beyond Toxics](#) (OR)

34. Big Island Reef Keepers Hui (HI)
35. [Biofuelwatch](#) (CA)
36. Black Rock Pollinator Partners (CT)
37. Blacrai (FL)
38. Borough of Media, Pennsylvania Environmental Advisory Council (PA)
39. Breathe Free Detroit (MI)
40. [Bridgeport Environmental Advocates](#) (CT)
41. Bristol Residents for Clean Air (CT)
42. [Brookhaven Landfill Action and Remediation Group \(BLARG\)](#) (NY)
43. [Brown Girls Think, LLC](#) (DC)
44. [Buckeye Environmental Network](#) (OH)
45. Bucks Environmental Action (PA)
46. BYO - CT (CT)
47. [BYO - U.S. Reduces](#) (NY)
48. California Communities Against Toxics (CA)
49. [California Environmental Justice Coalititon](#) (CA)
50. [Californians Against Waste](#) (CA)
51. Camden for Clean Air (NJ)
52. [Cascadia Climate Action Now](#) (WA)
53. Center for a Sustainable Coast (GA)
54. [Center for Environmental Health](#) (NC)
55. [Center for Environmental Transformation](#) (NJ)
56. [Chamber of Sustainable Commerce](#) (HI)
57. [Children's Environmental Health Network](#) (National)
58. [Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana](#) (IN)
59. Citizen's Action for a Safe Environment (CASE) (PA)

60. Citizens Against Ruining the Environment (IL)
61. [Citizens' Climate Lobby - Chester County](#) (PA)
62. Citizens for a Healthy Jessup (PA)
63. [Clean Air Action Network of Glens Falls](#) (NY)
64. [Clean Air Baltimore Coalition](#) (MD)
65. [Clean Air Coalition of Greater Ravena-Coeymans](#) (NY)
66. Clean Air Now Coalition (OR)
67. [Clean the Pacific](#) (HI)
68. [Clean Up the River Environment \(CURE\)](#) (MN)
69. [Clean Water Action - Pennsylvania](#) (PA)
70. [Climate Communications Coalition](#) (MD)
71. Climate Protectors Hawaii (HI)
72. Climate Reality Project - Southern CT Chapter (CT)
73. Climate Reality Project - Susquehanna Valley PA Chapter (PA)
74. [Coalition for Addition Without Subtraction \(CAWS White Plains\)](#) (NY)
75. [Coalition of Community Organizations](#) (TX)
76. Coalition to Protect New York (NY)
77. [Concerned Health Professionals of Pennsylvania](#) (PA)
78. Concerned Residents of Oxford (NY)
79. [Congregation Beth Israel of Media](#) (PA)
80. Connecticut Coalition for Economic and Environmental Justice (CT)
81. Connecticut Zero Waste Coalition (CT)
82. [Conservation Law Foundation, Inc.](#) (MA)
83. Cortlandt Peekskill Anti-Racism Collaborative (NY)
84. Covanta Plymouth Information and Awareness Group (PA)
85. [Darby Creek Valley Association](#) (PA)

86. DC Environmental Justice Coalition (DC)
87. [DC Environmental Network](#) (DC)
88. [DC Statehood Green Party](#) (DC)
89. [Del Amo Action Committee](#) (CA)
90. [Delco Environmental Justice](#) (Chester, PA)
91. Doctors for Camp Closure (MD)
92. [Don't Waste Arizona](#) (AZ)
93. [Downwinders At Risk](#) (TX)
94. [Drive The Future EV - Zero Emission Musicians](#) (PA)
95. [Earth Ethics, Inc.](#) (FL)
96. [Earth Quaker Action Team](#) (PA)
97. [Earthkeeper Health Resources](#) (NY)
98. [East Coventry Advocacy](#) (PA)
99. [East Michigan Environmental Action Council](#) (MI)
100. [ECHO Systems](#) (PA)
101. [Eco-Integrity Alliance](#) (CO)
102. [Ecology Center](#) (MI)
103. Ecology Party of Florida (FL)
104. Elmirans and Friends Against Fracking (NY)
105. [Empower DC](#) (DC)
106. [Energy Justice Law and Policy Center](#) (NY)
107. [Energy Justice Network](#) (National)
108. Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i (HI)
109. Environmental Justice Ministry, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Congregation (MD)
110. [Environmental Justice Task Force - Tucson](#) (AZ)

111. Every Mother is a Working Mother Network (PA)
112. Extinction Rebellion (XR) NPMH (NY)
113. [Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions](#) (VA)
114. [Fenceline Watch](#) (TX)
115. [First Congregational Church of Montclair](#) (NJ)
116. [Florida Right to Clean Water](#) (FL)
117. [Food & Justice w/ Brenda Sanders](#) (MD)
118. Fossil Free Tompkins (NY)
119. [Frackbusters New York](#) (NY)
120. [FracTracker Alliance](#) (PA)
121. [FreshWater Accountability Project](#) (OH)
122. Friends of Swann Creek (MD)
123. [Friends of the Bitterroot](#) (MT)
124. [Friends of the Wild Swan](#) (MT)
125. [GAIA](#) (International)
126. [Global Justice Ecology Project](#) (NY)
127. [Global Justice for Animals and the Environment](#) (NY)
128. [Global Women's Strike – U.S.](#) (PA)
129. [Go Green Ocean City](#) (MD)
130. [Grassroots Environmental Education](#) (NY)
131. [Green Party of Allegheny County](#) (PA)
132. [Green Party of Nassau County](#) (NY)
133. [Green Party of Pennsylvania](#) (PA)
134. Greenacres-Woodward Civic Association (MI)
135. [Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice](#) (CA)
136. GreenLatinos (CA)

137. [Greenpeace USA](#) (National)
138. GRID2.0 Working Group (DC)
139. [Grow Safe: Non-Toxic Missoula](#) (MT)
140. [Hawai'i Wildlife Fund](#) (HI)
141. [Hawaii Alliance for Progressive Action](#) (HI)
142. Hawai'i Clean Power Task Force (HI)
143. Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition (HI)
144. [Healthy Gulf](#) (LA)
145. [Help Uplift Leaders with Integrity \(HULI\) PAC](#) (HI)
146. Homes 4 All - Newark (NJ)
147. Hudson River Sloop Clearwater (NY)
148. [Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Climate Action Campaign](#) (CA)
149. [Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition](#) (NY)
150. [Inland Ocean Coalition](#) (CO)
151. [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#) (National)
152. [Iowa Green Party](#) (IA)
153. Jesus People Against Pollution (MS)
154. [Just Transition Alliance](#) (CA)
155. [Just Zero](#) (National)
156. [Keep It Wild PA](#) (PA)
157. Kokua Na Aina (HI)
158. [League of Women Voters Pennsylvania](#) (PA)
159. [League of Women Voters of the United States](#) (National)
160. [Life of the Land](#) (HI)
161. Locust Point Community Garden (MD)
162. [Long Island Progressive Coalition](#) (NY)

163. Lynn Neighbor to Neighbor (MA)
164. [Madison County Clean Power Coalition](#) (GA)
165. Maine Solar Energy Association (ME)
166. Marcus Hook Area Neighbors for Public Health (PA)
167. [Maryland Conservation Council](#) (MD)
168. Maryland Energy Advocates Coalition (MD)
169. Maryland Latinos Unidos (MD)
170. [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#) (MD)
171. [Media Alliance](#) (NY)
172. Merchantville Green Team (NJ)
173. [Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition](#) (MI)
174. [Midlothian Breathe](#) (TX)
175. [Mid-Missouri Peaceworks](#) (MO)
176. [Minnesota Environmental Justice Table](#) (MN)
177. [Montana Environmental Information Center](#) (MT)
178. [Montgomery Countryside Alliance](#) (MD)
179. [Mothers Out Front - Dutchess](#) (NY)
180. Mothers Out Front - Northern Westchester (NY)
181. [Mountain Watershed Association](#) (PA)
182. NAACP - Chester Branch (PA)
183. [NAACP - District of Columbia Chapter](#) (DC)
184. [NAACP - Maryland State Conference](#) (MD)
185. NAACP - Windham/Willimantic Environmental Justice Committee (CT)
186. [Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club](#) (NY)
187. [Neighbors Against the Gas Plants](#) (PA)
188. New York Climate Action Group (NY)

189. No More Dirty Power in Killingly (CT)
190. [North Carolina Climate Justice Collective](#) (NC)
191. [North Country Earth Action](#) (NY)
192. [North County Climate Change Alliance](#) (CA)
193. Norwalk Zero Waste Coalition (CT)
194. [Nothing Left to Waste](#) (PA)
195. [Nuclear Energy Information Service](#) (IL)
196. [Nuclear Information and Resource Service](#) (MD)
197. [One Pennsylvania](#) (PA)
198. Our Revolution Hawaii (HI)
199. [Parable of the Sower Intentional Community Cooperative](#) (CA)
200. [Parents Against SSFL](#) (CA)
201. [Partnership for Policy Integrity](#) (MA)
202. Partnership for Sustainability in Delaware (DE)
203. [Payday Men's Network - U.S.](#) (PA)
204. Peace and Wellness Collective (MD)
205. [Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW!](#) (PA)
206. [Peckham Action Group](#) (NY)
207. People for a Healthy Environment (NY)
208. [People for Community Recovery](#) (IL)
209. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (National)
210. [Philly DSA](#) (PA)
211. [Philly Neighborhood Networks](#) (PA)
212. [Physicians for Social Responsibility - Pennsylvania](#) (PA)
213. [Post-landfill Action Network](#) (PA)
214. Progressives for Climate (CO)

215. [Protect All Children's Environment](#) (NC)
216. [PT Partners](#) (CT)
217. [Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility](#) (National)
218. [Pueblo Action Alliance](#) (NM)
219. Quaking Spirit Peace Sanctuary (NY)
220. Quantum Institute (NY)
221. [Race to Zero Waste](#) (CA)
222. [Rachel Carson Council](#) (MD)
223. [Recycle Ann Arbor](#) (MI)
224. [Recycle Hawaii](#) (HI)
225. Recycling Advocates of Middle Tennessee (TN)
226. Refabric (MD)
227. [Repowered](#) (MN)
228. Resist Spectra (NY)
229. [Rusty & The Crew](#) (MN)
230. Safe Energy Rights Group (NY)
231. [Saugus Action Volunteers for the Environment \(SAVE\)](#) (MA)
232. Save Our Illinois Land (IL)
233. Save Our Streams (PA)
234. Save the Pine Bush (NY)
235. [Sequoia ForestKeeper](#) (CA)
236. [SHARKastics](#) (HI)
237. [Sierra Club](#) (National)
238. [Sierra Club - Broward Group](#) (FL)
239. [Sierra Club - Greater Baltimore Group](#) (MD)
240. Sierra Club - Long Island Group (NY)

241. Sierra Club - Loxahatchee Group (FL)
242. Sierra Club - Pennsylvania Chapter, Zero Waste Team (PA)
243. Sisters of Charity of New York (NY)
244. [Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia](#) (PA)
245. [Solarize Albany](#) (NY)
246. [Solebury Environmental Action Club](#) (PA)
247. [Solidarity Committee, Capital District](#) (NY)
248. [Sound Resource Management Group](#) (CO)
249. [South Bronx Unite](#) (NY)
250. South Country Peace Group (NY)
251. St. John Chrysostom RC Church Justice and Peace Committee (PA)
252. [Sugarloaf Citizens Association](#) (MD)
253. [Sunflower Alliance](#) (CA)
254. [Sunrise Lewisburg](#) (PA)
255. [Sunrise Movement Pennsylvania](#) (PA)
256. [Surfrider Foundation](#) (National)
257. [Surfrider Foundation - Hawai'i Region](#) (HI)
258. [Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii](#) (HI)
259. Sustainable Kohala (HI)
260. [Sustainable Tucson](#) (AZ)
261. [Syracuse Cultural Workers](#) (NY)
262. [Teaching Artist Institute](#) (MD)
263. [Terra Advocati](#) (TX)
264. [Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services](#) (TX)
265. [The Enviro Show](#) (MA)
266. [The Last Beach Cleanup](#) (CA)

267. The Ultimate Good Organization (PA)
268. The Vasile Group (CT)
269. The Weinberg Nature Center (NY)
270. [Thrive Baltimore](#) (MD)
271. [Tikkun Olam Chaurah](#) (PA)
272. [Toxic Free Philly](#) (PA)
273. [Tracey Stephens Interior Design](#) (NJ)
274. [Transition Town Media](#) (PA)
275. [Tri-Valley CAREs \(Communities Against a Radioactive Environment\)](#) (CA)
276. [Turtle Island Restoration Network](#) (TX)
277. [Understanding. Devotion. Take Action. Justice. \(UDTJ\)](#) (PA)
278. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook, Racial Concerns Committee (NY)
279. [Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County, Texas](#) (TX)
280. [Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community](#) (IA)
281. Unite North Metro Denver (CO)
282. United For Clean Energy (NY)
283. [United Parents Against Lead](#) (VA)
284. Upper Burrell Citizens Against Marcellus Pollution (PA)
285. Upper Westchester Dawah Committee (NY)
286. Urban Ore, Inc. (CA)
287. [Valley Improvement Projects](#) (CA)
288. [Valley Watch, Inc.](#) (IN)
289. [Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative](#) (VA)
290. [Vote Climate](#) (MN)
291. [Watchdogs of Southeastern Pennsylvania \(WaSEPA\)](#) (PA)

292. [Waterspirit](#) (NJ)
293. [Waukesha County Environmental Action League](#) (WI)
294. [We are the People, Inc.](#) (PA)
295. [We Want Green, Too](#) (MI)
296. Weavers Way Cooperative Association (PA)
297. [WESPAC Foundation, Inc.](#) (NY)
298. West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs (CA)
299. [West End Revitalization Association](#) (NC)
300. [Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions](#) (NY)
301. Westmoreland Marcellus Citizens' Group (PA)
302. [Westport CEDC](#) (MD)
303. Women of Color in the Global Women's Strike (PA)
304. [Womxn From The Mountain](#) (CO)
305. Working on Waste (NH)
306. [Zero Hour](#) (UT)
307. [Zero Waste Capital District](#) (NY)
308. Zero Waste Hawai'i Island (HI)
309. [Zero Waste Ithaca](#) (NY)
310. [Zero Waste Kaua'i](#) (HI)
311. Zero Waste Montgomery County (MD)
312. [Zero Waste O'ahu](#) (HI)
313. [Zero Waste USA](#) (CA)