

If Frederick County, Maryland Does Not Proceed with an Incinerator, What is the Alternative?

By Caroline Eader

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An alternative plan to a trash incinerator for Frederick County is to reach a 70% diversion rate within the next 5 to 7 years. (Frederick's current recycling rate is approximately 44%.) In addition to this goal, we propose immediate steps be taken to divert construction and demolition waste, all electronic waste and any and all items which can be reused rather than dumped. These goals may be reached through working within the current County programs and/or by private industry's participation.

Frederick County's waste stream is approximately 40% paper, and another 30% is compostables. These two parts of our waste can be recovered. The Frederick County School system has minimal recycling, and business recycling is not widely available. There should be exploration of how to incorporate these two sectors into the diversion and recycling plan and goals.

To further the goal of adding composting to the waste collection process, the infrastructure for composting facilities need to be identified and built. With Frederick County's high commitment to maintaining its rural characteristics and long agricultural history, this is desirable as well as achievable within 5 years.

Because not all county households have received their recycling carts, the full benefits of the recent conversion to single-stream recycling in Frederick County should first be fully implemented, and quantified. When composting is added (known as a 3-cart system), within approximately a year, a community typically sees an increase in their recycling rate by 10 to 15%.

Looking at the hierarchy of resource recovery as recommended by the EPA, landfilling and incineration are the lowest ranked choices in resource management. The Frederick County Solid Waste Management Plan, 1998-2017 also excludes incineration as a means of waste disposal. Therefore, we believe a 5-year moratorium on any further procurement of an incinerator is justified and proper, in order to plan, implement and maximize the above identified goals.

We can look at example communities such as Fresno and San Francisco, CA, and Toronto, Canada for sample policies and programs which are successful in such communities in order to identify specific steps Frederick County should take. We anticipate the need of a Zero Waste consultant of the caliber of the guest speakers who spoke at the Waste Not! Expo in Frederick on March 28, 2009 in order to help design and plan specific steps to reach the maximum waste diversion and resource recovery.

With an incinerator there is nonprocessable waste and residual ash which must be landfilled. By focusing on maximum diversion and reaching the goals above, Frederick County would achieve the equivalent waste (or even less) to landfill. This would cost a fraction of Frederick's portion of the \$526,000,00.00 - \$600,000,000.00 price tag of the proposed incinerator.

To better understand "Zero Waste" please see
http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste/zerowaste_faq.html

*Needham & Foxborough, MA have already reached 65%; Nantucket Island 90%!

www.WasteNotFrederick.org