



ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK

OPPOSES



Key to Legislative Ratings:



Major Detriment



Substantial Detriment



Detrimental

S.6171 (FOLEY) A.9455 (FIELDS)

Summary

This bill would amend subdivision 1 of section 2046-g of the Public Authority Law. It would take out the provision that requires a public referendum if the Islip Resource Recovery Agency wants to incur indebtedness of more than \$50 million.

Explanation

The Islip Resource Recovery Agency seeks to increase its debt ceiling substantially in order to expand its facility's solid waste incinerator (also known as "resource recovery" or "waste-to-energy"). Solid waste incinerators are some biggest sources of toxic pollution in the country. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, incinerators, like the one located in Islip, release a number of hazardous pollutants, including cadmium, lead, mercury, dioxin, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen chloride, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter. Dioxin and mercury are of particular concern because they are toxic, persist in the environment, and bioaccumulate. These hazardous pollutants cause air contamination and leach toxics into the ground and surface water. These pollutants can also cause public health problems, such as various forms of cancer, neurological problems in young children and babies, decreased lung function and increased incidents of asthma to name a few.

Islip, of all New York communities, should know that there is no place called "away" where garbage can be thrown "away," as it was the home port of the infamous Mobro, a garbage scow that prowled international waters looking for a home to dump its putrid cargo. That embarrassing incident was one of the reasons New York gave its waste procedures a hard look. That assessment resulted in the Solid Waste Management Act of 1988, which established state policy for handling waste that places reduction, reuse and recycling at the top and incineration and landfilling at the bottom. In the absence of proof that equal resources are being applied to the preferred waste strategies like recycling and waste reduction, this measure is a de facto violation of that policy. Instead of expanding their incinerator, the Town of Islip should pursue other options to reduce solid waste and the need for an incinerator.

Environmental Advocates of New York opposes this bill.

Memo 33