



PRESS RELEASE

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CAMPAIGNERS ISSUE LITANY OF CONCERNS TO AID GOVE INVESTIGATION OF NLWA

- Investigators expected to scrutinize 10-page list of concerns related to North London Waste Authority
- Gove warned of ‘knock-on effects of NLWA’s fiduciary failures and false emissions claims’
- Issues raised relate to incinerator contract, NLWA accounts, governance problems, and greenwashing
- List highlights NLWA’s use of flawed data to downplay environmental impact of planned incinerator
- Gove told ‘reckless misinformation campaign’ damages credibility of UKMBA, investor confidence

London, 16 June 2022—In a [10-page letter](#) addressed to ‘levelling up’ secretary Michael Gove, a broad-based north London environmental justice coalition has submitted a detailed list of concerns regarding the North London Waste Authority (NLWA).

The letter was issued following the [Islington Tribune’s report](#) that Gove had decided to investigate NLWA’s ‘opaque’ accounts. In it, the coalition welcomes the secretary’s decision to determine whether NLWA’s plans for a new waste incinerator in Edmonton ‘represent value for money’ and calls on him to prevent NLWA from ‘doing more damage than it already has’.

‘We expect Secretary Gove’s investigators to scrutinize all the issues we’ve raised,’ said Carina Millstone, founder of the Stop the Edmonton Incinerator Now (StEIN) coalition, which includes Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion, trade unions, and a broad range of other groups and individuals.

The coalition breaks down its concerns into four main categories: issues related to the £800 million Edmonton incinerator contract, issues related to audit firm Mazars’ review of NLWA accounts, NLWA governance issues, and issues related to NLWA communications, or greenwashing.

Released a week before NLWA’s annual general meeting, the letter casts additional doubt on the waste authority’s leadership. At the meeting, on 23 June, NLWA board members will appoint a new chair – or reappoint the current chair, Cllr Clyde Loakes of Waltham Forest, who has held the position since June 2008, or 14 years.

‘This AGM will be watched closely, not only by north London politicians, residents, and waste sector experts who oppose current plans for the Edmonton incinerator, but undoubtedly also by Gove and his team of investigators,’ said Millstone.

She added: ‘For climate justice campaigners, Cllr Loakes’ tenure has become synonymous with dangerous greenwashing during what we all know is a critical decade for our climate.’

The letter to Gove is one among a host of ongoing efforts to hold NLWA’s leadership to account, including for entrenching environmental racism by siting the plant in one of the UK’s most deprived areas and for misleading the public about the planned incinerator’s environmental impact. As revealed in a recent [expert assessment](#), NLWA emissions data ‘is either grossly misleading or reflects a failure to understand what is happening to the UK power generation system’, a reference to the fact that the national electricity grid is decarbonising rapidly.

A prime example of greenwashing is that NLWA continually claims that the planned incinerator would be ‘better’ than landfill in environmental terms (even though NLWA practice and plans involve negligible landfill). The expert assessment demonstrates, however, that the plant’s emissions ‘are double those of landfill’. It also shows that ‘by the time the facility nears the end of its life, its net emissions may be 3.7 times the emissions that would be generated by landfilling the same waste’, in view of grid decarbonisation.

NLWA greenwashing on the carbon impact and other aspects of the planned incinerator appear to have led the UK Municipal Bonds Agency (UKMBA) to announce that it would issue ‘green bonds’ for the facility even though waste incinerators are not low-carbon and thus do not qualify for such bonds. Experts have since warned investors to ‘[steer clear](#)’ of Edmonton incinerator bonds, emphasizing that they are ‘[simply not green](#)’ and that ‘[incinerating waste to produce energy has no place in a green bond framework](#)’.

In the letter to Gove, the StEIN coalition warns that NLWA’s ‘reckless misinformation campaign’ risks damaging both the credibility of the UKMBA and investor confidence in green bonds.

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Links

- *Islington Tribune*, ‘Gove to look into incinerator authority’s “opaque” accounts’ (see page 6): <https://edition.pagesuite.com/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=e097f6c2-8ed9-4588-9aa8-c0e437456292>
- StEIN letter to SoS Gove (‘For DLUHC investigators: issues of concern related to the North London Waste Authority (NLWA)’): https://stop-edmonton-incinerator.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Letter-to-Michael-Gove_sent-12-06-22.pdf
- StEIN press release of 19 April 2022 (‘Edmonton incinerator data “grossly misleading” or sign of ignorance’): <https://stop-edmonton-incinerator.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-04-19-worse-than-landfill-press-release-2.pdf>
- Dr Dominic Hogg, ‘Should Incineration Attract Finance from Green Bonds?’: <https://www.dominichogg.com/hoggblog/should-incineration-attract-finance-from-green-bonds>
- Dr Dominic Hogg, ‘Should the NLWA Incinerator be Eligible for Green Bonds?’: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fac6c36040eba5dc1b46766/t/62582306b13846610205e7dd/1649943305722/Eligibility+of+Incineration+for+Green+Bonds+Final+Version.pdf>
- ‘A burning issue’, Environmental Finance (registration required): <https://www.environmental-finance.com/content/analysis/a-burning-issue.html>
- Public Finance, ‘Waste body “pauses” plans for UK Municipal Bonds Agency issuance’ (registration required): https://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2022/04/waste-body-pauses-plans-uk-municipal-bonds-agency-issuance?utm_source=Aestra&%3Butm_medium=email&%3Butm_term=
- ENDS, ‘Anti-EfW lobby target green bond issued for Edmonton EfW plant’ (registration required): <https://www.endswasteandbioenergy.com/article/1740415/anti-efw-lobby-target-green-bond-issued-edmonton-efw-plant>
- Call on UK Municipal Bonds Agency to withdraw ‘green bonds’ for Edmonton incinerator: <https://stop-edmonton-incinerator.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Call-on-UKMBA-to-withdraw-green-bonds-for-Edmonton-incinerator-as-incompatible-with-UK-taxonomy-for-sustainable-finance.pdf>
- Basil Clarke, ‘New analysis further undermines case for incinerator rebuild’, Palmers Green Community: <https://www.pgweb.uk/environment/3338-new-analysis-further-undermines-case-for-incinerator-rebuild>