



## Stop the Edmonton Incinerator Now

notoxicsmoke@gmail.com

London, 29 November 2024

To: **Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero; Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

cc: Sir Keir Starmer, Prime Minister; Mary Creagh, Minister for Nature; The Planning Inspectorate, NLHPP case team; John Armitt, Chair, National Infrastructure Commission; Piers Forster, Interim Chair, Climate Change Committee; Dame Glenys Stacey, Chair, Office for Environmental Protection; Alex Sobel MP, Chair, Net Zero All-Party Parliamentary Group; Baroness Hayman, Chair, Peers for the Planet; Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb; Mayor Sadiq Khan; Zack Polanski, Chair, London Assembly Environment Committee; Hannah Jameson, Director, London Councils Climate Unit; Cllr Clyde Loakes, Chair, North London Waste Authority; Diane Abbott MP; Calvin Bailey MP; Dawn Butler MP; Bambos Charalambous MP; Feryal Clark MP; Jeremy Corbyn MP; Stella Creasy MP; Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP; Barry Gardiner MP; Margaret Hillier MP; David Lammy MP; Kate Osamor MP; David Pinto-Duschinsky MP; Sarah Sackman MP; Tulip Siddiq MP; Emily Thornberry MP; Dan Tomlinson MP; Catherine West MP; Cllr Peray Ahmet; Cllr Ergin Erbil; Cllr Richard Olszewski; Cllr Barry Rawlings; Cllr Diarmaid Ward; Cllr Grace Williams; Cllr Caroline Woodley

Dear Secretaries of State,

Last month the [BBC](#) highlighted that ‘burning waste produces the same amount of greenhouse gases for each unit of energy as coal power’, which makes electricity from waste incinerators the UK’s ‘dirtiest form of power’. More people now understand why scientists are warning that waste incineration is a ‘disaster for the climate’ and why they are calling for a ban on new incinerators in England, such as the ones already established in Wales and Scotland.

It is in this context that we request that you immediately withdraw all Government support for the new Edmonton incinerator in Enfield, London, and for its heat supply to a district heat network. Specifically, we call on you to take the following steps without delay:

- 1. Revoke the development consent order that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy granted to the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) for the new Edmonton incinerator in February 2017**
- 2. Direct the Environment Agency to revoke the permit it granted to NLWA for the new Edmonton incinerator in June 2017**
- 3. Withhold all direct and indirect funding for the new Edmonton incinerator and its district heat network connections.**

A failure to take these steps would undermine the Government’s [efforts](#) to decarbonise the electricity grid and provide clean power by 2030; its plans for reducing waste arisings in line with the Environmental Targets (Residual Waste) (England) Regulations 2023; and its commitment to creating sector-specific circular economy [roadmaps](#) to accelerate progress towards net zero and job creation.

It would also run counter to your commendable postponement of the planning decision on the proposed energy-from-waste (EfW) incinerator at Flixborough. You informed Parliament that this delay would allow the Government ‘[sufficient time](#)’ to consider Defra’s forthcoming residual waste infrastructure capacity assessment.

Indeed, DESNZ and Defra simply cannot make informed decisions about any incinerator-related project without considering overcapacity risks and the threats they represent to the Government’s circularity, waste minimisation, clean energy, and net-zero imperatives.

In the case of the new Edmonton incinerator, however, construction is going ahead although the plant: a) is entirely [surplus](#) to the incineration capacity required to process London’s waste (other plants could treat north London’s waste), and b) was granted development consent based on [flawed carbon calculations](#) that significantly underestimate its climate impact. Related concerns include the following:

**Social injustice and health risks:** The socially unjust [siting](#) of the new incinerator in one of the most deprived wards in the UK ensures that the local population will continue to be exposed to highly toxic [ultrafine particulates](#) (PM0.1), which ‘constitute a significant health hazard’, make up by far the majority of emitted particles, and [are able to pass through advanced filters](#) ‘into the local environment’.

**Stunted recycling.** North London’s recycling rate has stagnated at about [30%](#), a rate far below the 2020 target of 50%. This means that although [more than half](#) of the waste that is sent for incineration could be recycled if properly [sorted](#), about 70% goes up in smoke. NLWA has failed to install advanced mixed-waste sorting technology, although it could significantly reduce the amount of plastic (and other recyclables) that go to incineration, as well as associated CO2e emissions and toxic pollution.

**No CO2 abatement.** NLWA [calculations](#) indicate that carbon capture and storage technology would not be installed in the Edmonton incinerator until 2035 at the

earliest, if at all. This position is incompatible with the Climate Change Committee’s net-zero pathway, which requires the waste sector to halve its CO2 emissions by 2035 (compared to 2019) to enable the UK to meet its net-zero target by 2050.

**‘Massively oversized’ incinerator.** The new Edmonton incinerator is to be 30% larger than the plant it is to replace, despite a decline in waste arisings and Government efforts to boost recycling and reduce waste, including through the deposit return scheme, extended producer responsibility, and separate food waste collections.

**Financial risk.** The costs for the new incinerator complex have spiraled out of control, most recently [increasing](#) by 25%, from £1.2 billion to [£1.52 billion](#), undermining value for money. Costs to the taxpayer will increase further once incinerators are included in the Emissions Trading Scheme. And the plant’s long lifespan heightens the risk that it will become a costly [stranded asset](#).

Progress on the new incinerator has [stalled](#), due largely to labour shortages. The construction lull and the postponement of the plant’s projected completion to 2027 provide the perfect opportunity to formally pause and rethink the plans for the incinerator and its district heating scheme.

We look forward to receiving a swift response to our three requests.

Sincerely,



Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah CBE  
(World Health Organization BreatheLife Ambassador)

Better Homes Enfield, Black Lives Matter Enfield, Camden Civic Society, Climate Emergency Camden, EnCaf, Enfield RoadWatch, Extinction Rebellion, Fair-Well, Friends of the Earth London Network, Hackney Fixers, Haringey Trades Union Council, The Hornbeam, Islington Climate Centre, Islington Environmental Alliance, Islington Environmental Forum, Palmers Green Community, Parents for Future East London, Parents for Future UK, She Changes Climate, Sustainable Hackney, Transition Highbury, Transition Walthamstow, Unite Community East London Branch, Unite Community Enfield Area Branch, Unite Community Haringey & Barnet Branch, Waltham Forest Climate Emergency Campaign, Waltham Forest Trades Council, XR Camden, XR Haringey, XR Muswell Hill, XR Waltham Forest, Zero Waste Europe

An annotated version of this letter is available at [stop-edmonton-incinerator.org](#).