Memorandum of Support

February 26, 2019

S.2270 (May)*/A.5029-A (Cusick)*
*not same as

Title: An act in relation to creating the “Finger Lakes Community Act of 2019”

Purpose: Prohibit the siting of new incineration facilities in the Finger Lakes Region.

Statement of Support: Trash incineration is one of the most expensive and polluting ways to manage waste or to make energy. It competes with recycling and composting for the same dollars and materials while burning valuable resources that have greater value if properly reused. New York has adopted a “beyond waste” philosophy to what we conventionally view as garbage: a management approach that benefits people and the environment by reducing toxicity, conserving resources, and facilitating economic development in communities. The goal is to conserve and recover all resources - not burn or bury them. This requires more producer responsibility for the end-of-life management of the products companies create and more incentives for the consumer to buy products that are easily recycled and reused, so that ultimately our waste stream is down to a trickle and free of harmful pollutants.

Trash incineration is antithetical to this concept. The high cost of construction and operation of facilities requires a heavy and consistent flow of municipal waste that in turn creates toxic ash, truck traffic, localized odor problems, and harmful air and greenhouse gas emissions – all to produce expensive electricity. The demand for trash fuel also undercuts recycling and waste reduction programs that rely on the same flow of plastics, glass, metal and organics to produce new materials and products.

Currently, the construction of a massive trash incinerator has been proposed for the former Seneca Army depot in Romulus, NY. This rural location sits between the two biggest Finger Lakes, Seneca and Cayuga, and would become a multi-state destination for garbage – burning up to 2,640 tons of garbage per day brought in by hundreds of daily truck trips. The Finger Lakes region is world renowned for its picturesque beauty and its thriving economy based upon tourism, wineries and agriculture. A trash incinerator that would despoil water
quality, create air pollution and congest scenic roadways with truck traffic and residual litter would significantly harm all three industries.

To protect the Finger Lakes, S.2270/A.5029-A would prohibit incineration facilities from receiving a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need and other permits or certificates from the State if they attempt to locate within the Finger Lakes watershed.

**Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Urges your support of S.2270/A.5029-A**