

Better Trash Options for Sullivan County - May, 2025

What Sullivan County has now:

- Single stream 'recycling' collection at transfer stations
- Bags of mixed solid waste and trash collection at transfer stations
- Private trash collection of mixed waste from individual homes, businesses & municipalities.
- Limited single stream 'recycling' (e.g. cardboard, newspaper, tires) mixed with all the rest collected together often gets landfilled.
- The County Legislature is considering a Waste-to-Energy incinerator in Sullivan County.

Why avoid incineration? - including Waste to Energy (WTE) incinerators?

Incinerators produce pollution of air, water and land

Incinerators are economically destructive to surrounding areas by;

- Lowering property values
- Discouraging tourism/second homeowners
- Endangering human health - plants and animals are harmed
- 1/3 of the weight of the burned material is toxic ash, requiring costly special disposal. None of the recyclable, sale-able materials are saved.
- WTE incinerators are very expensive to build, produce minimal energy (not sale-able amounts) and often mean the operating municipality must import trash to meet volumes required by the facility or pay more under their "put or pay" contracts.

How to avoid incineration?

Reduce overall trash volume by:

- 1- Maximizing what the public recycles, repurposes and reuses. Recycled materials can be resources with monetary value.
- 2- Engaging businesses, schools, government and other public facilities to also recycle.
- 3- Establishing universal composting programs for households, multi-family units and businesses (especially food related) and for yard wastes.
- 4- Construction and demolition materials to be recycled as much as possible.
- 5- Commit to increasing community education, and tracking waste reduction progress.

What is needed to avoid incineration – Reduce the trash volume!

- Sullivan County needs a materials recycling facility that eliminates single stream collection and reduces overall trash volume by 25 to 30% by people self-sorting their items.
 - Encourage Rescue & Repair options, like 'Repair Cafes' for highest reuse of items.
 - Universal composting programs that are easily and readily available.
 - Initiate "Pay as you throw" charging by weight at transfer stations as an incentive for people to minimize trash. Any inappropriate dumping must be penalized.

WHAT TO DO? - be informed, learn about options and implications, contact county legislators (they will be making the decisions), write Letters to the Editor, help educate other people.

**For a blueprint to reach these goals - see Community_Zero_Waste_Roadmap
"ON THE ROAD TO ZERO WASTE"**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hBy-9kXVZtiqZkoj62yNtrnaZGi84cm0/view>

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