

# Better Trash Options for Sullivan County - Sept, 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 also 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 compliments single stream collection and reduces overall trash volume by 25 to 30% by people bringing and 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"**

SEE more on  
the back->

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

This document by: **Damascus Citizens for Sustainability** [DamascusCitizens.org](http://DamascusCitizens.org)

<https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org/2025/05/26/incinerator-proposal-in-sullivan-county-continues/>

and latest on pollution from these incinerators and IMPORTANT economic info:

In 2022, visitors and second-home owners contributed nearly \$900 million to Sullivan County's economy - **this is one quarter of Sullivan's total economy** (<https://lotscap.com/economy/36105/> ) and according to Sullivan County's own Second Home Study (<https://www.sullivanyny.gov/sites/default/files/departments/DPEM/Resources/secondhomeownerstudy.pdf> ) rural values including clean air and water, and view-sheds are very important to second home owners/buyers choice to visit and to have a second home in SC and to keep their investment. ( SC total GDP (2022, Thousands) \$ 3,982,842 <https://lotscap.com/economy/36105/>)

This economic sector generates almost \$48 million in local taxes and letting Sullivan County households save \$3,370 in taxes, on average. A waste-to-energy incinerator would likely cause air and water pollution, noise, and odors, thereby eroding tourism, tax revenues, and lowering property values. - from this report: <https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/Catskills-2022-NYS-Tourism-Economic-Impact.pdf>

Additionally, Sullivan County's highly positive and growing farming sector would be hurt by the pollution from an incinerator. This sector is about another **1/4 of SC's economy** ( <https://www.sullivanyny.gov/Departments/PlanningEnvironmental/AgriculturalProtection> ).

Also, even the newest waste to energy incinerators produce damaging air and water pollution - see clarifying analysis here:FALSE that "new incinerators don't hurt you" white paper done for Broward County, FL. Find it here: <https://www.energyjustice.net/fl/health.pdf>  
32 pages - 21 of the report plus 11 pages of references

or

3 page condensed version here:

<https://energyjustice.net/incineration/healthstudies.pdf>

The human health impacts of the emissions from these facilities are well documented, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31535434/> - with full analysis here: <https://www.nrdc.org/bio/daniel-rosenberg/burned-why-waste-incineration-harmful>

Plus, Monticello area is considered a Potential Environmental Justice area ( <https://ejstatebystate.org/directory/new-york> ) and in New York, adding more polluting facilities to such an area requires additional layers of review under SEQRA and may be prohibited.

We asked the legislature to please rescind the RFP. There are other options.

AND addressing the legislature, told them that:

It is your obligation as legislators to protect the health and welfare of those living, working, visiting the county.

I highly suggest your team review the suggestions and concerns above and listed at: <https://www.damascuscitizensforsustainability.org/2025/05/26/incinerator-proposal-in-sullivan-county-continues/>

