

September 16, 2024

The Honorable Daniella Levine Cava  
Miami-Dade County  
111 NW 1st Street Miami, FL 33128  
Via email to [mayor@miamidade.gov](mailto:mayor@miamidade.gov)

**RE: Innovate, Don't Incinerate. Reject all plans for new waste incinerators in Miami-Dade County**

Dear Madam Mayor,

The below-signed organizations, businesses, and churches focused on protecting the public health and quality of life for every Miami-Dade resident, and restoring America's Everglades, urge you to reject all of the sites proposed for a new waste incinerator project and instead invest in alternative forms of waste elimination and production that do not involving burning waste.

There are compelling reasons to reject a new waste incinerator. Incinerators emit a slew of toxins including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), sulfuric acid, nitrogen oxide, mercury, and arsenic. Health burdens documented in environmental justice communities and that can be caused by exposure to incinerator emissions include respiratory problems, cancer, nasal and eye irritation, reproductive harm, and a host of other hazards.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the pollution from an incinerator in *any* Miami-Dade County location could seriously undermine the ultimate goals of Everglades restoration, Biscayne Bay water quality improvement, and resiliency of the Biscayne Bay and Southeastern Everglades Restoration Project (BBSEER) Project and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project as a whole. The Everglades, coastal estuaries, and residential communities are ultimately a single ecosystem connected through water, land, and air. A threat to one segment of this ecosystem is a threat to all of it.

Please reject the construction of any new incinerator within Miami-Dade boundaries. The solution to our wider community's waste troubles is not to create new troubles for any of our county's neighborhoods or county neighbors to the north. The only humane and

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<sup>1</sup> Earthjustice, Re: Comments Submitted on Behalf of Florida Rising on Draft Title V Permit No. 0250348- 013-AV, Proposed in Response to Application for Renewal of the Title V Permit for the Miami-Dade County Resources Recovery Facility, 8-11 (Dec. 20, 2021), available at <https://earthjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/earthjustice-comment-letter-in-opposition-to-miami-dade-rrf-title-v-permit-renewal.pdf>

sustainable solution is one that prioritizes waste reduction, repurposing, reusing, composting, and state-of-the-art waste recycling, to decrease landfill needs, in accordance with the established Hierarchy of Waste<sup>2</sup>. Miami-Dade must focus on waste reduction rather than accommodating increased waste generation.

Don't perpetuate the historical trend of foisting dirty, toxic county utility projects on already overburdened neighborhoods or communities of color. Miami-Dade County can avoid pitting one neighborhood against another — innovation, not incineration, is the answer.

Sincerely,

**Brickell Homeowners Association**

Ernesto Cuesta, President

**Central Florida Jobs with Justice**

Chelsea Rivera, Policy Organizer

**Climate Reality Project, North Broward and Palm Beach County, FL Chapter**

Susan Steinhauser, Co-chair

**Earth Ethics, Inc.**

Mary Gutierrez, Executive Director

**Earthjustice**

Dominique Burkhardt, Senior Attorney

**Florida For All**

Chanae Jackson, Statewide Organizing Director

**Florida National Organization for Women**

Debbie Deland, President

**Florida Rising**

MacKenzie Marcelin, Climate Justice Director

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Sustainable Materials Management: Non-Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Hierarchy, <https://www.epa.gov/smm/sustainable-materials-management-non-hazardous-materials-and-waste-management-hierarchy>.

**Florida Student Power**

Alyssa White, Climate Justice Organizer

**Friends of Biscayne Bay**

Scott Pollowitz, Executive Coordinator

**Friends of the Everglades**

Eve Samples, Executive Director

**LNB Groves, Inc.**

Marc Ellenby, President

**Miami Climate Alliance**

Jeanette Ruiz, Executive Director

**Moms in Nature's Defense (MIND)**

Catalina Lemaitre, Founder

**Nature Coast Conservation**

DeeVon Quirolo, President

**Palm Beach County Environmental Coalition**

Panagioti Tsolkas, Co-chair

**Polk Clean Energy Alliance**

Katherine Sutherland, President

**Reef Relief**

Mill McCleary, Executive Director

**ReThink Energy Florida**

Brian Lee, Campaigns Director

**Sierra Club Florida**

Susannah Randolph, Chapter Director

**South Florida Wildlands Association**

Matthew Schwartz, Executive Director

**Southern Coalition for Social Justice**

Anne Harvey, Chief Counsel for Environmental Justice

**Struggle for Miami's Affordable and Sustainable Housing (SMASH)**

Adrian Alberto Madriz, Co-Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure

**A Zero Waste Culture**

Helena Iturralde, Founder

cc:

Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners

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Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources (RER), Lourdes Gomez, [lourdes.gomez@miamidade.gov](mailto:lourdes.gomez@miamidade.gov)

Assistant Director for Planning (RER), Jerry Bell; [jerry.bell@miamidade.gov](mailto:jerry.bell@miamidade.gov)

Director, Department of Solid Waste Management (DSWM), Dr. Aniesha Daniel, [aneisha.daniel@miamidade.gov](mailto:aneisha.daniel@miamidade.gov)