

# Recycling will decline if waste burners get go ahead, warn Greens



16 November 2020

Green Party peer Jenny Jones has warned of a doubling of emissions from incineration unless there is an immediate moratorium on new Energy from Waste plants.

As well as signing a joint letter to the Prime Minister along with other politicians, campaigners and NGOs, she has also written to the Committee on Climate Change saying that the building of new incinerators contradicts the aim of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Baroness Jones, said:

“We already burn more waste than we recycle and the amount we incinerate will continue to increase if the government does not immediately put a ban on further energy from waste plant being constructed.

“New figures show that a doubling of incinerator capacity is in the planning pipeline [1] and yet the government maintains that the decision is down to individual local authorities. As soon as an incinerator is built then recycling and reuse goes into reverse as local authorities meet their contractual obligations to provide fuel for these polluting monsters.

“The government target of recycling 65% of domestic waste by 2035 is a non-starter, unless we start closing down incinerators over the next few years. That is the experience of France, which has the biggest reliance on Energy from Waste and one of the poorest recycling rates in Europe. Policy makers in Scandinavia have also realised that their reliance on energy from waste is stopping them from reaching their climate change goals, with Denmark announcing a plan for scaling back on its use of incinerators.

“The CCC has previously suggested that carbon capture and storage as a partial solution, but that mitigates emissions rather than dealing with them completely and who exactly is going to pay for this big investment in clean up technologies and when does it start?

“I’ve always accepted the argument that energy from waste is a better way of dealing with residual waste than landfill, but a recent report by Zero Waste Scotland showed that even that advantage is marginal and could disappear with a slight increase in the proportion of plastic in the waste stream. [2]

“We need to stop building incinerators and start focusing on reducing waste, along with repair, reuse and recycling. Creating a circular economy also means creating tens of thousands of new jobs and that is the kind of build back better boost we could all benefit from. “

ENDS

## Notes

1

<https://members.parliament.uk/member/4297/writtenquestions?page=1#expand-1241473>

2

<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/ZWS%20%282020%29%20C%20impacts%20of%20incineration%20SUMMARY%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf>

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