

Friends of the Earth 地球之友

FoE(HK)'s Position on Clinical Waste Treatment Method

Our position

1. FoE(HK) agrees with the government that clinical waste is potentially dangerous that need to be tackled. However, FoE(HK) urges the government to develop its environmental policy objectives and to adopt a fair and open selection procedure in order to achieve the objectives of protecting the environment.
2. The government is now proposing to retrofit CWTC in order to burn all the clinical waste generated in Hong Kong. However, FoE(HK) suggests that incineration should be avoided as far as possible because of its polluting effects on the environment, including not just the possible creation of dioxin but also the emission of green house gas mainly carbon dioxide that causes climate change.
3. FoE(HK) welcomes the government's effort to explore alternative treatment methods but would argue that a government consultancy study which leads to the retrofitting of CWTC may not serve the purpose of finding the best way to deal with clinical waste and improve environment in Hong Kong. It is because with the absence of government policy on waste disposal and treatment as well as air quality improvement strategy, the public and the private sector are left with confusion about the criteria for selecting a particular treatment method. **They will not be able to understand whether our environment including the air quality will be improving in the future or not, and how does the selection of a particular method contribute to this improvement in air quality.**
4. The selection of clinical waste treatment method, therefore should demonstrate to the public in a transparent manner the followings:
 - i. The ultimate objective of government's environmental policy in relation to the treatment of waste, the generation of polluting residuals and the overall improvement of the environment including air quality;
 - ii. The selection criteria of clinical waste treatment method in the light of the above and other considerations including public finance.

Our recommendations

5. Given the considerations above, FoE(HK) advocates the government to:
 - i. Laid down clearly the objectives of environmental policy in Hong Kong, particularly the air quality improvement strategy so that various government measures or regulations can be adopted to achieve the objective;
 - ii. Adopt **a fair and open tender procedure** in order to allow proponents of different treatment methods to demonstrate to the government the strength of the method advocated and how they could fulfill fit-into the government's policy objectives;
 - iii. Allow **a trial period** whereby the government can test various short listed candidates if they could satisfy the demands so as to protect public interest.

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