

Presentation to Legco Environmental Panel on 22 March 2014

EPD is a department with a poor track record - one only has to consider the years wasted on a useless engine idling ban, whilst our environment has got progressively worse.

EPD have been told many times before to set up a proper sustainable waste policy, involving waste reduction, sorting and recycling, and proper disposal; this they have failed to do, and merely keep coming up with the same old idea of landfill expansion and huge polluting mass-burn incinerators.

EPD has repeatedly refused to look at alternatives and modern technology. This is incompetence. There are better solutions available— the site-alternatives and the different approach by the IWMA group for example, and the plasma and gasification solutions by the NTCG, yet EPD refuses to listen. Again, to continue blindly down the “burn and bury” policy is incompetence.

EPD has for years faked recycling numbers, making recycling performance look better by including re-exports of recyclables, without subtracting the imports. This was exposed in early February, but they have not changed direction – preferring to ignore this. This is incompetence which verges on dishonesty.

The whole idea of a mass-burn incinerator on Shek Kwu Chau is fundamentally dishonest. Consider EPD’s 2 statements “These incinerators do not pollute” and “The incinerator must be built as far as possible from centres of population”. One of these statements must be a lie.

There were untruths in the EIA for Shek Kwu Chau –for example, the prevalence of winds blowing towards Hong Kong was mis-stated. But, if incinerators don’t pollute, wind direction is irrelevant. Or are we being lied to again here?

So we have here a department with a proven record of incompetence which verges on dishonesty. They must be told that Hong Kong expects and deserves a better and professional approach to waste management. EPD should not be allowed the easy option of using taxpayer billions on a “quick and easy” continuation of their old failed policy.

Moreover, since they cannot even get their own figures right, they are not to be trusted with billions of taxpayer dollars.

I would remind Members of the city of Harrisburg in Pennsylvania in USA, where the city actually went bankrupt over cost under-estimates for their city’s incinerator.

As a World City, Hong Kong deserves a World-Class waste management policy; continuing blindly with EPD’s failed policy will not do.

R E J Bunker

Mui Wo
Lantau