MY TRASH STORY....
TOXIC LEGACIES

RONBOUND RESIDENTS: SAY NO TO NEWARK GARBAGE.
DEFINING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Challenges material inequality, cultural misrecognition and power relations that deny meaningful participation (D. Pellow, 2003)

- **Distributive justice** - the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens among different communities
- **Procedural justice** - access to decision-making processes that impact our quality of life & environment.
- **Recognition** – freedom from oppression & ability to be fully recognized & treated with dignity in society
- **Structural justice** – political and economic conditions that structure possibilities and institutional outcomes

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**We, the people of color,** gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth, to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves, to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

**The Principles of Environmental Justice (EJ):**

1) Environmental Justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.

2) Environmental Justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.

3) Environmental Justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.

4) Environmental Justice calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.

5) Environmental Justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.

6) Environmental Justice demands the cessation of the production of all toxics, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.

7) Environmental Justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.

8) Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

9) Environmental Justice protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.


11) Environmental Justice must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.

12) Environmental Justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.

13) Environmental Justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.

14) Environmental Justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

15) Environmental Justice opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.

16) Environmental Justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

17) Environmental Justice requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reappropriate our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

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More info on environmental justice and environmental racism can be found online at www.ejnet.org/ej/

Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington, DC, drafted and adopted these 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, the Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.
ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

“whether it is a bullet that’s shooting us in the street or it is a coal plant or oil refinery or a nuclear reactor that’s killing us in the community, it’s the same result in terms of our disproportionate demise. So we see a moral, spiritual, and literal equivalency between these factors that are targeting us, that are harming us, that are killing us.” (Pollution is Racial Violence, J. Patterson, NAACP)

Spatial forms of environmental racism in urban landscapes reflect & reproduce racist formations:
white flight, redlining, exclusionary & expulsive zoning, industrial zoning, discriminatory lending & housing, policing, etc.

Environmental Racism Is Nothing New
Race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil.

- 56% of the population near toxic waste sites are people of color.
- Have 38% higher nitrogen-dioxide exposure.
- People of color: Have seen 95% of their claims against polluters denied by the EPA.
- Are 2x more likely to live without potable water and modern sanitation.

THE Nation.
“By 1970, white people expected to have clean bodies and clean clothes and to live in clean neighborhoods, with waste out of sight and out of mind.” (C. Zimring, Clean & White)

A demographic picture of the types of communities and the types of people that are most likely and least likely to oppose a Waste-to-Energy project would be invaluable to an effective siting program. (Cerrell, 1984)
THE “IMPECCABLE LOGIC” OF WASTE

Just between you and me, shouldn’t the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDC’s [less developed countries]…I think the economic logic of dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that.” (L. Summers, World Bank, 1991)

- Production, movement and management of waste reflects a neo-liberal economic logic
- Toxic Colonialism is tied to the functioning of our economic system

<table>
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<th>TOP 20 COUNTRIES USED AS DUMPING GROUNDS</th>
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PATTERNS OF NYC WASTE EXPORT

Of the more than 3 million tons of residential waste DSNY collects annually:

- 16-18% recycled & sent mostly overseas
- 12% exported to Covanta Incinerator in Newark, NJ;
- Remainder exported to landfills in multiple states.

3 - 6 million tons of commercial waste/year exported to landfills

http://metrocosm.com/where-new-york-garbage-goes/
https://blueshift.io/nyc-waste.html
Covanta Essex in Newark burned 378,450 tons of the city’s residential trash last year.
Large portion of the city has a median household income of $0-$23,250, which is well below the 2019 federal poverty
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Multiple pollutants emitted by multiple sources of pollution in a community and their interaction with each other and social vulnerabilities (N. Sheats)

Over 8 million lbs of toxic emissions released annually.

The community’s zip code contains over 300 air permits.

90 streets have emitting facilities and over 200 facilities store hazardous substances on site.
IRONBOUND: UNFAIR SHARE OF WASTE FACILITIES

- State’s largest incinerator
  @ 920,000 tons waste/year
- State’s largest sewage treatment facility
  @ 330 million gallons water/day
- 4 garbage transfer stations
  @ 650,000 tons waste/year
- 10 scrap metal yards
- 9 auto scrap junk yards
- 5 recycling facilities
- 3 demolition recycling facilities
- 1 yard waste facility
- 1 food waste facility

TOTAL = 35 waste-related facilities
COVANTA ESSEX

- Covanta Essex is owned by the Port Authority and under long-term lease to Covanta Energy
- Built 1991 with public financing
- Burns 985,000 tons garbage/year from
- >22 municipalities in NJ, NYC, & private haulers
- Over 50% of the capacity is dedicated NYC waste, mostly Manhattan (8 districts)
- 2012 PANYNJ signed 20 yr lease and DSNY contract
Incinerator reported to NJDEP:

- 100 air permit violations 2017-2020:
  - 50 PM (opacity) violations - some > 8x permit limit
  - 18 CO violations — some > 5x permit limit
  - 16 O2 violations,
  - 3 SO2 violations

- Over 10 incidences of purple plumes 2019-present
79 percent (58 incinerators) of MSW incinerators in the U.S. are located in environmental justice communities.

Interactive Map
INCINERATION & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Almost 80% of Incinerators are in EJ Communities

Produce toxic ash

Emit air pollution that harms human health

Drains resources from local economy

Discourages recycling, reuse, composting and zero waste

For interactive map and report go to www.tishmancenter.org,
In short, incinerators do not solve the problems of toxic materials present in wastes. In fact they simply convert these toxic materials to other forms, some of which may be more toxic than the original materials.” (P. Connett)

- Globally, waste disposal, primarily from incineration, contributes to ~8 percent of the total anthropogenic mercury emissions.

- In the EU, MSW is the second most important emission source type for dioxins

- Stack emissions from MSW incinerators include PM, dioxins, lead, mercury, NOx, SO2 and carbon monoxide.
“Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them.”

Source: Zero Waste International Alliance Adopted March 2013
Zero Waste and Environmental Justice

“When encountering a serious problem, not merely to try to solve the problem itself but to confront & transform the processes that give rise to the problem in the first place.” (Harvey)

EJ Principles

6) **Environmental Justice** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.

17) **Environmental Justice** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

Zero Waste is the Environmental Justice Movement’s answer to Waste
Zero waste programs include all of the following strategies:

- Reducing consumption and discards
- Reusing discards
- The principle of producer accountability (including extended producer responsibility strategies)
- Comprehensive recycling
- Comprehensive composting or bi-digestion of organic materials
- Citizen participation and worker rights
- A ban on waste incineration and illegal dumping
- The systematic reduction of landfilling over time
- Effective policies, regulations, incentives, and financing structures to support these systems.

WWW.NO-BURN.ORG, GAIA
ZERO WASTE & ORGANICS

23 cities representing more than 150 million citizens committed to C40’s Advancing Toward Zero Waste Declaration. Declaration urges turn away from false solutions like incineration

US Cities with Zero Waste Programs:

- Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Austin, San Diego, etc.
- Baltimore Compost Collective

In the US, 2014-2017 –

- Curbside organics programs grew from 79 to 148, reaching an estimated 5.1 million households,
- Additional 318 communities, representing 6.7 million households, have access to compost drop-off programs.
New York City’s organics program is the largest in the country, reaching approximately 1.6 million households, 3.5 million residents in all five boroughs - one-third of the community districts in the city.

Benefits
- Reduces NYC’s overall carbon footprint by 0.01 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent (MTCO2 eq)
- Environmental, economic and social benefits such as lessening the impact of pollution on EJ Communities
- Composting generates approximately 7.4 jobs per 10,000 tons of refuse processed annually. In comparison, the same annual tonnage disposed via landfilling generates 2.2 jobs and waste-to-energy only 1.2 jobs (Platt et al. 2014).
- Ecological benefits to Stormwater programs that can use compost materials to enrich soil and absorption
1/3 of 3.8 million tons of residential waste composed of organics

Of the 80% of NYC Waste that went to landfills in 2017:
- 77% of it can be diverted
- 34% organics
- Yard waste accounts for ~70% of organics tonnage & food waste the other 30%.

- Of the 50 community board districts in NYC, 23 districts (40%) have curbside organics pickup
A ZERO WASTE CITY NEEDS ORGANICS DIVERSION

2013: Voluntary weekly curbside collection program for food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard waste began (LL77)

2015: Mayor sets goal of "zero waste" to LANDFILL by 2030; commercial food establishments requirements; roll out of citywide collection by 2018

2018: DSNY halts citywide expansion of the program

2019: Mayor Blasio pledges to require composting in an Earth Day speech

2020: Organics program budget cut
RESOURCES

- Tishman Environment & Design Center, https://www.tishmancenter.org
- GAIA, http://www.no-burn.org
- Story of Stuff, http://storyofstuff.org
- Trashed, http://www.trashedfilm.com
- Ironbound Community Corporation www.ironboundcc.org
- Institute for Local Self Reliance, https://ilsr.org
- PLAN, www.postlandfill.org/

BOOKS

- Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States, Carl Zimring
- Smarter New York City: How City Agencies Innovate, Ed. André Corrêa d'Almeida
- The Zero Waste Solution, Paul Connett