



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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## Press Statement

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### **CAP urges Penang Government to Not Take the Incinerator Path**

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is shocked and disappointed that the Penang government is considering incineration to get rid of municipal waste in the State. CAP strongly urges the Penang government to move towards zero waste and not take the incinerator path.

Local Government Committee chairman Jagdeep Singh Deo was reported stating that the previous stance taken by Penang was to say "no" to incinerators, but with latest advancement in technology, the state believes it could be safe to use.

We beg to differ because even the most advanced incinerators release thousands of pollutants that contaminate the air, soil, and water which enter the food supply and concentrate up through the food chain. Aside from toxic air emissions, incineration technologies produce highly toxic ash.

Using incinerators would also mean sheer waste of valuable resources which could otherwise have been recovered for use, especially since these discards are highly amenable to source segregation, composting and recycling.

Jagdeep had said that the state recorded a recycling rate of 43% last year, achieving 33% on the island and 47% in Seberang Perai. This is a good indication of diverting waste from being disposed, and thus the State should have a higher diversion target and aspire to achieve the target faster.

This can be done through composting of organic waste that makes up at least 50% of the total waste generated. Organic waste which includes kitchen scraps, garden waste can be easily composted and thus diverted from the waste stream that needs to be disposed.

Over the years, CAP and several communities have successfully demonstrated the viability of composting organic waste at household, schools, institutions and farm levels. Several schools in Penang with CAP's guidance have converted canteen food waste into compost and set up vegetable gardens using the compost.

In Seberang Perai, there are several initiatives to tackle food and organic waste at varying scales. Gary Teoh in Auto-City Juru collects and converts food waste from restaurants into compost whilst in Bagan Ajam, market and food waste are also turned into compost.

The Penang state government should look into these different initiatives that turns discards into resources, rather than burning them and contributing to emissions and ash that are harmful to people's health and the environment.

Jagdeep reportedly said the cost of transferring waste to an incinerator would be at least “four times” higher than transporting it to a landfill. The current tipping fees at the Pulau Burung landfill, near Nibong Tebal, is RM22.22 a tonne. Why should taxpayers be burdened to pay the cost for incineration whilst there are cheaper, viable and proven methods?

Incineration and other polluting end-of-pipe waste technologies are not logical solutions to our waste crisis. The world is waking up and realizing the failures of incineration. Developed countries that have previously relied on incineration are now shifting away from it, and peddling their technology to developing countries. Many countries are now embracing Zero Waste and investing in long-term waste management strategies including shutting down their incinerators.

We need the people becoming more mindful of their consumption and minimise waste generation; the government needs to ban unsustainable products and put up efficient waste collection and management system; and corporations need to drastically reduce their production and use of single-use plastics, and redesign to focus on true environment-friendly and sustainable products and delivery systems.

No to Incinerators! Move Towards Zero Waste!

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