

Medical Waste Incineration in Curtis Bay: A Pattern of Environmental Injustice and Pollution

City Council Informational Hearing (Resolution 23-0201R)
Medical Waste Incinerators

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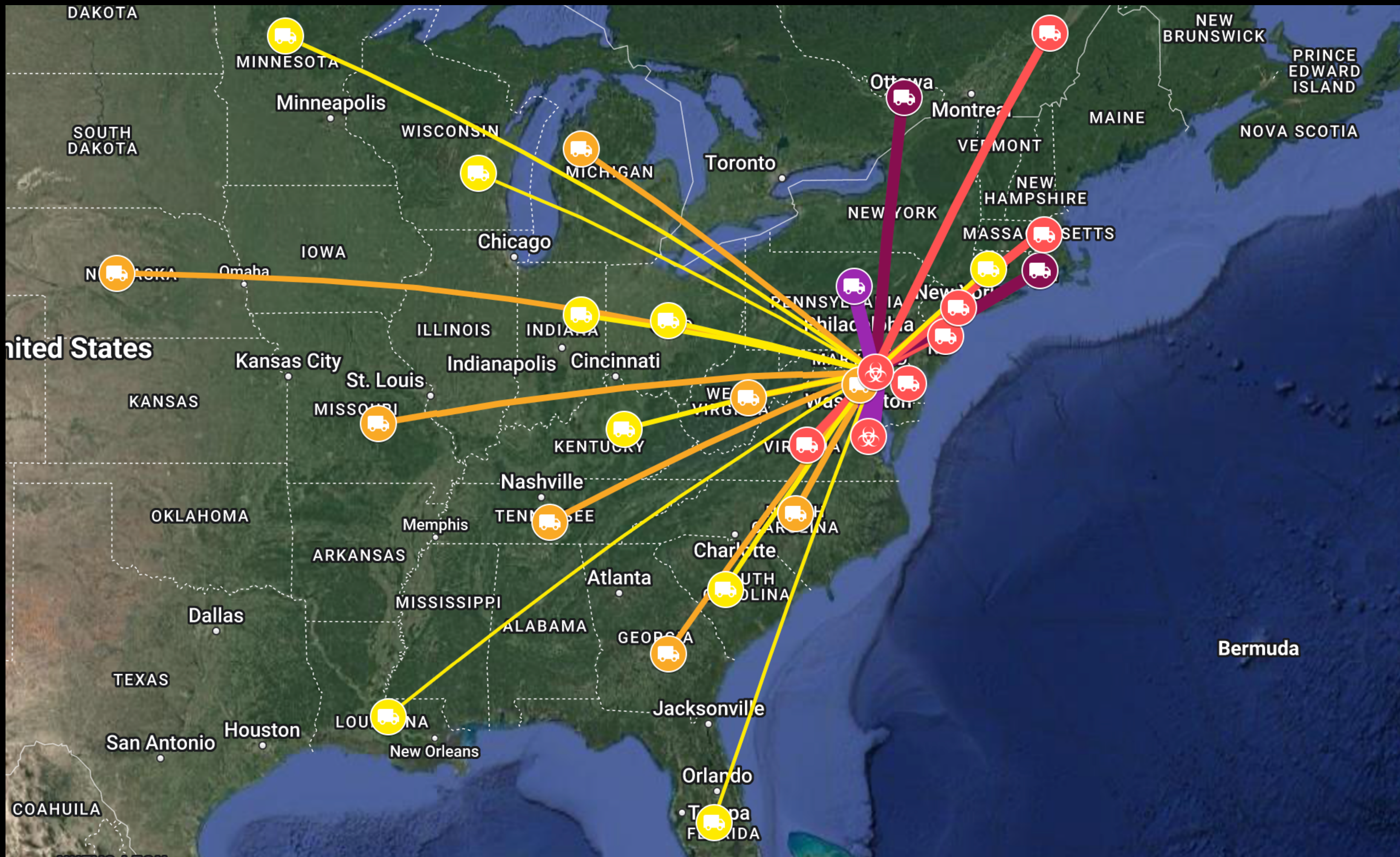
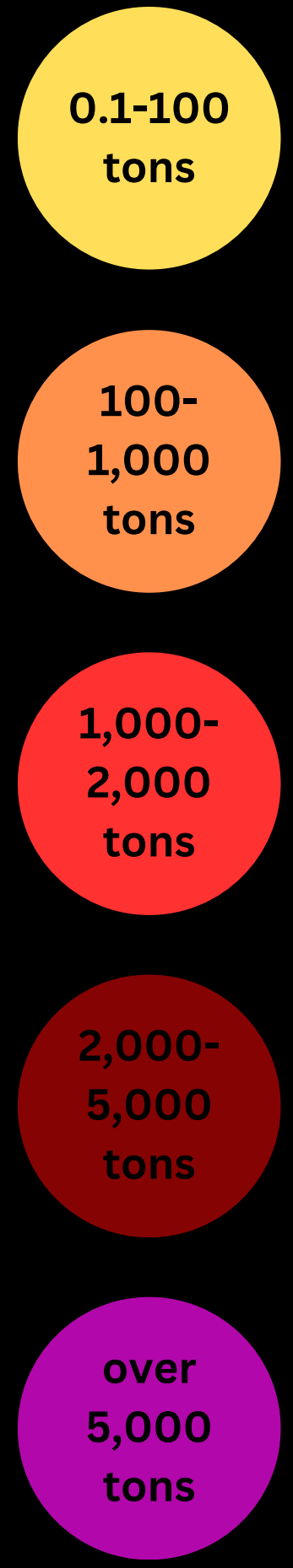


2 Majority of waste is imported from other states and as far as Canada
Estimate = 76% out of state

1 Largest medical waste incinerator in the country

3 Long history of violations and community opposition

2022 Waste flows to/from Baltimore's Medical Waste Incinerator



1989: South Baltimore residents oppose medical waste incinerator, City approves¹

- **Councilman Murphy** warns that the development will attract an even greater concentration of polluting development in South Baltimore¹
- **With the greenlight from City officials, over 20 local hospitals start burning waste at the incinerator¹**
- **Now in 2024, Curtis Bay is the highest ranked community in the state for environmental burden using a Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) screening tool²**

1994: Incinerator caught illegally importing out-of-state waste³

- **Medical Waste Associates plant operator says the incinerator "has become so corroded that it is in danger of collapse."**³
- **Files for bankruptcy after losing most of its hospital customers.**³
- **Pays thousands of dollars to settle state pollution charges.**³

1997: Incinerator asks Baltimore City Council to legalize importing medical waste from up to 250 miles away, City Council agrees.⁴

- **"I do not believe the health of our citizens is something that should be traded away to accommodate this business," said Council President Lawrence A. Bell III. "Let other cities take care of their own waste."⁴**
- **"If history is any indication, that just means we'll be back here to fight another battle in a few years...It's unbelievable that anybody would go along with this when they know of the high pollutants and cancer rates in our area." said Doris McGuigan, longtime Brooklyn Park resident.⁴**

2004-2005: Incinerator violates mercury emissions limit 400 times in 2 years⁵

- "Allowing Phoenix [Services Inc.] to continue to emit pollution is like letting me dump garbage on my neighbor's lawn -- except that in Phoenix's case, the pollution is toxic," **Patrick Moylan, president of Concerned Citizens for a Better Brooklyn**⁵
- **Johns Hopkins Hospital** sues Phoenix and successfully ends contract for failure to pick up waste on time⁶
- **District 10 City Councilman Ed Reisinger** attempts to ban out of state medical waste⁶

2019-present: Incinerator pleads guilty to 40 criminal & environmental charges⁷ but continues to violate⁸

- **Maryland announces one of the largest environmental penalties in state history on Oct 17, 2023 (\$1.75 Million)⁷**
- **Community establishes monitoring of facility in Jan 2024 and documents dozens of black smoke events**
- **State of Maryland brings new lawsuit for violations at the facility on March 14, 2024⁸**

Community camera monitoring of dark smoke emissions



Jan 26, 2024



Feb 21, 2024



Feb 26, 2024



March 8, 2024



March 12, 2024



March 13, 2024

The State of Maryland files new lawsuit against medical waste incinerator⁹

March 14, 2024



March 17, 2024

Dark smoke emissions event on Jan 26, 2024



Preliminary Analysis of Community Camera Monitoring Data

Methods & Findings



Dark smoke event from trail camera on March 8, 2024

Analyzed daytime trail camera images
February 21- March 13, 2024
~250 hours of footage

27 daytime black smoke emission events identified

Average Duration:
40 mins 29 secs
(sd: 46 mins 54 secs)

Duration:
Min: 1 min
Max: 2 hrs 16 mins

Total smoke emission time:
~17 hrs 32 mins

On Average...
1.17 events/day
during observation period

Preliminary Analysis of Community Camera Monitoring Data Summary

- **Camera-based visual observation of black smoke events suggests they occur frequently during daytime**
- **Implications of these visible black smoke events on local community air pollution burden**
- **Context of:**
 - **Recognized health and environmental justice impacts of medical waste incineration^{10,11}**
 - **Recent permit violations for release of hydrogen chloride, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter at this facility¹¹**

Preliminary Analysis of Community Camera Monitoring Data Summary

- **Recent permit violations for release of hydrogen chloride, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter at this facility¹¹**

57. During the second, third and fourth quarters of 2023, CBE submitted to the Department required quarterly CEMs reports which showed that the Facility exceeded the Operating Permit's 24-hour block average emissions limit for HCl on 73 separate occasions/days.

58. During the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2023, CBE submitted to the Department required quarterly CEMs reports which showed that the Facility exceeded the Operating Permits 24-hour block average emissions limit for CO on 77 separate occasions/days.

“Some of my public statements were viewed as heartless, and that was deliberate. The strategy and message had been decided. I didn't want to talk about environmental dangers, or the impact on children. If we did that, it would open us up to conversations about the impact of the (medical waste) incinerator (where there were pockets of statistical trouble), or lead poisoning.”¹²

- Former Mayor Kurt Schmoke -

Moving forward: breaking 3 decades of environmental injustice

**1. Hospitals, end contracts to send waste to this
incinerator**

2. City Council, ban out of state medical waste

**3. Governor Moore and MDE, shut down this
incinerator**

References

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