



F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen 	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	17-0034R – Request for State Action – Set a Strong Nitrogen Oxides Limit for the Wheelabrator Baltimore Incinerator		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

Sept. 21, 2017

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review 17-0034R – Request for State Action – Set a Strong Nitrogen Oxides Limit for the Wheelabrator Baltimore Incinerator. The purpose of this resolution is to call upon the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to set stronger limits for the emissions of nitrogen oxide (NO2) for the Wheelabrator.

The resolution will not impact BCHD operations, as BCHD does not enforce the standards being recommended for reduction. The positive impact of MDE reducing allowable NO2 emissions for those living in the immediate area is difficult to measure. However, the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) recent Integrated Science Assessment (ISA) for Oxides of Nitrogen – Health Criteria (Final Report, 2016) serves to strengthen the cumulative body of evidence that indicates that short-term exposure to NO2 can cause respiratory effects. In particular, these effects are related to asthma exacerbation, a disease that impacts Baltimore’s children disproportionately.

Baltimore City suffers from high rates of asthma. The state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reports 12.4% of Baltimore City adults have asthma, four points higher than the statewide average. Moreover, 1 in 5 children under the age of 18 in Baltimore City suffer from asthma, double the national average. These high rates lead to large losses of productivity through missed school and work days. Reduced air pollution realized through a Zero Waste plan could help the city lower its asthma rates.

BCHD appreciates the opportunity to review issues connected to NO2 emissions at this informational hearings, and to provide information on the potential health benefits of lower emissions.



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Commissioner of Health
Baltimore City