

Mr. Nickolas J. Themelis
Director, Earth Engineering Center,
Columbia University
500W 120th St., 1047 Mudd
New York, NY 10027

Dear Mr. Themelis:

Thank you for your comments on EPA's letter to Ms. Maria Zannes, and thank you for the three figures you provided along with your April 9, 2003 letter concerning waste-to-energy. I appreciate your interest in this subject.

In your letter, you refer to the fact that the BioCycle report shows more combustible solid waste going to landfills, than does the EPA characterization report (*MSW in the United States: 2000 Facts and Figures*). These numbers differ because *BioCycle* and EPA are actually measuring different types of information. *BioCycle* is reporting the total tonnage of all types of waste received at municipal solid waste management facilities. This often includes materials that EPA does not include in our definition of municipal solid waste, such as construction and demolition debris, asphalt roofing shingles, manufacturing process wastes, and biosolids. EPA's method calculates the total quantity of waste generated by households, businesses, institutions, and the non-manufacturing component of industries (office waste from industries). These are the wastes that typically are viewed as the responsibility of municipal government to manage. EPA and *BioCycle* are both aware of the differences between our numbers and the reasons for these differences. We feel that both types of data are of value for planning and managing MSW programs.

If you wish to collaborate with BioCycle magazine this year, you may be able to provide assistance by providing them with information on management of municipal solid waste. We plan to call you to discuss this further.

Your letter also suggested that EPA differentiate between incineration for waste-to-energy and landfilling, in its report. We distinguish between combustion and landfilling in chapter 3 of this report, notably in Table 29. Also, we use the term combustion because not all combustion is waste-to-energy. As you stated, encouraging waste-to-energy is an important component of EPA's programs, and we have assessed the contributions of combustion of MSW with energy recovery in chapter 6 of our report, *Solid Waste Management and Greenhouse Gases*.

Thank you very much for your comments and interest in this complex topic. If you would like further information, please feel free to contact Deborah Hanlon at (703) 308-5824.

Sincerely yours,

Marianne Lamont Horinko
Assistant Administrator

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