



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

SEP 16 2008

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE

Beverly D. Joseph
473 West 158th Street
Apt. #71
New York, New York 10032

Dear Ms. Joseph:

Thank for your letter of August 7, 2008 regarding the potential of energy recovery from the combustion of waste materials. We agree that the consumption of energy is a major issue confronting the United States.

Currently there are energy recovery facilities throughout the country that use waste materials as sources of energy. Some municipal solid waste is sent to boilers where the heat generated from the combustion process produces steam. This steam is directed to a turbine, and the electricity produced is sent to the power grid. About 2,700 megawatts of electrical power is generated in this way. There are 87 of these types of energy recovery facilities in the United States.

Although the power produced from the combustion of waste is relatively small when compared to the power produced from coal, natural gas, and oil, it is important to realize that this waste would otherwise be sent to a landfill and its energy lost.

Carbon monoxide is present when combustion occurs. EPA has standards in place to assure that the release of gases from combustion, including carbon monoxide, are at the lowest level achievable using the best pollution control technology available.

We appreciate your concern about finding alternative sources of energy. EPA will continue to explore the use of alternative fuels such as waste materials to help reduce our reliance on energy from fossil fuels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Hale".

for Matt Hale, Director
Office of Solid Waste