

# BREATHE FREE DETROIT

SHUT DOWN  
THE  
INCINERATOR

CLEAN AIR  
CLEAN ENERGY

**WHAT IS AN INCINERATOR?** A facility that burns trash. The Detroit incinerator burns 3,300 tons of trash from homes, schools, hospitals, and businesses each day. What's leftover is toxic ash that must be landfilled and emissions that pollute our air and contribute to climate change.

**WHO OWNS THE INCINERATOR?** Detroit Renewable Power (DRP) has owned the incinerator since 2010. On November 30, 2017 Michigan Public Service Commission approved the sale of Detroit Thermal Power (including the incinerator) to Projects Mist Holdco LLC of New York City.

**WHERE DOES THE TRASH COME FROM?** Trash burned at the Detroit incinerator comes from cities in ten Michigan counties (Wayne, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, Bay, Genesee, Ingham, Kent, and Livingston), Illinois, Ohio, and Canada.

**WHAT DOES THE INCINERATOR COST THE CITY?** Detroit pays \$25 per ton, approximately 66% more than other cities to send its trash to the incinerator. Pollution from the DRP facility costs \$2.6 million in health costs each year.

**HOW DOES THE INCINERATOR AFFECT OUR AIR?** DRP violated the federal Clean Air Act over 750 times since 2013. The violations include failure to monitor sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and nitrous oxides, exceeding allowed limits of carbon monoxide emissions, and failure to effectively capture particulate matter.

**Breathe Free Detroit** is a community and grassroots-lead campaign fighting to shut down the Detroit incinerator. We work to engage the community, research the financial ties and the public health effects of the incinerator, and encourage decision-makers to stop the pollution of Detroit's air.





**HOW DOES THE INCINERATOR AFFECT OUR HEALTH?** A high respiratory hazard index in the area around the incinerator means it is one of the most dangerous places in the state to breathe. The incinerator is a health risk for a community that is already overburdened by air pollution.

- A Detroiters is 3x more likely to be admitted to the hospital for asthma than other Michigan residents. Children living near the incinerator are 5x more likely.
- Air pollutants released by the incinerator have been found to: cause and activate asthma, cause an increase in the use of asthma medication, and increase asthma-related hospitalizations for children.
- The Michigan Department of Community Health (now the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services) calls Detroit the “**epicenter of asthma**”
- Pollution from the Detroit incinerator can also cause: premature death, nonfatal heart attacks, irregular heartbeat, decreased lung function, coughing and difficulty breathing. Children, older adults, and those with heart or lung diseases are most likely to be affected.

**WHO LIVES NEAR THE INCINERATOR?** 76,681 children live within 5 miles of the incinerator. 87% of residents within one mile are persons of color; 60% live below the federal poverty line, with 20% unemployment.

**WHAT ARE THE JUSTICE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE INCINERATOR?** A low-income community of color bears the environmental and public health burden of burning trash from wealthier (and whiter) communities in Michigan (including the Grosse Pointes and Oakland County) and beyond. The Detroit incinerator is a prime example of environmental racism.

**WHAT ARE ALTERNATIVES TO INCINERATION?** Robust recycling programs and zero waste initiatives can greatly reduce the amount of trash produced. According to GAIA (Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives), most of what we now waste can be safely and economically recycled, reused, composted, or turned into biogas. We also need to simply use less disposable stuff and redesign our products so that they are toxic-free and built to last. **Contact [ZeroWasteDetroit.org](http://ZeroWasteDetroit.org) (313-986-2990) or go to [app.detroitmi.gov/recycling](http://app.detroitmi.gov/recycling) to sign up for a free recycling bin.**

## WHAT SHOULD RESIDENTS DO?

**1. REPORT ODORS** to MDEQ’s Pollution Emerging Alert System hotline: 800-292-4706  
Staff are available to receive calls 24/7.

*Be prepared to provide:*

- Name
- Phone #
- Address
- Time of smell
- Location of smell
- Nature of smell (i.e. rotten eggs)

**2. REPORT LOUD NOISES** coming from the facility to City of Detroit Ombudsman: (313) 224-6000  
or City Clerk: (313) 224-3261

**3. GET INVOLVED**

- Like us on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter
- Signup for our newsletter
- Attend one of our meetings!