

Chairperson Vitali and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Walter Tsou. I serve on the Board of Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 109 and the environmental and public health concerns affecting Chester, Pennsylvania, and its surrounding areas. My testimony highlights the significant cumulative environmental impacts posed by industrial facilities and transportation infrastructure within a ten-mile radius of Chester.

Industrial and Waste-to-Energy Facilities

Just within a five-mile radius of Chester, multiple industrial and waste-to-energy facilities contribute to air and water pollution, exacerbating health risks for local residents. These include:

- **Kimberly-Clark Paper Mill:** cited for fuel and oil and sulfuric acid spills
- **Marcus Hook Industrial Complex:** Includes refineries and chemical plants that emit various air pollutants and the end terminal of natural gas liquids from Mariner East.
- **ReWorld/Covanta Delaware Valley Resource Recovery Facility** - multiple fines for air and ground contamination.

These facilities collectively contribute to poor air quality, increasing the risk of respiratory, cardiovascular and cancer diseases among residents. Commissioner Motley and Drs. Howarth and Lupolt offer much more details on these health impacts in their testimonies.

Impact of the Philadelphia International Airport

To the east of Chester, the Philadelphia International Airport presents additional environmental burdens, including:

1. Noise pollution, which can lead to sleep disturbances and increased stress levels.
2. Air pollution from aircraft emissions, which can contribute to cardiovascular and respiratory problems.

Industrial Facilities Across the Delaware River

Across the Delaware River in New Jersey, additional industrial operations further exacerbate Chester's environmental burden. Notable sites include:

- **South Jersey Port Corporation** operates the Balzano Terminal and the Broadway Terminal in Camden.
- **Pureland Industrial Complex** in Logan Township, housing companies like Amazon and Mitsubishi.

Gibbstown, New Jersey has several industrial facilities, merely 10 miles away from Chester:

- **Paulsboro Refinery:** Processes crude oil into products like gasoline and jet fuel
- **Gibbstown Logistics Center:** A proposed location for exporting liquefied natural gas.

These facilities do and will release pollutants that can travel across the river, affecting air and water quality in Chester. They can also affect air quality and contribute to greenhouse gases exacerbating climate change.

Superfund Sites and Additional Environmental Hazards

Finally, of concern is the historical **Wade superfund** site now used for parking for Subaru park and the **Delaware County Regional Water Quality Control Authority:** Treats sewage and wastewater.

In short, there are many pollution sites within the close proximity of Chester and the cumulative impact of these sources of pollution must be weighed in any permitting decision.

Unspoken is the source of much of this pollution at ReWorld/Covanta namely burning plastic. As one of the largest incinerators in America, our inability to find a way to dispose of plastic means much of this fossil fuel created product ends up as a combination of toxic ash and chemical air pollution. The plastic industry has plans to triple their current production meaning even more of their waste will be burnt in Chester. And major cities including Philadelphia, New York, NJ, and Delaware depend on the incinerator to handle their trash problem.

Ironically, some of these plastic precursors are being made at the Shell cracker plant in Monaca, PA which means even more fracking and pollution over the Marcellus Shale. So Pennsylvania serves as both the source and pollution end of plastic. Which begs the question, couldn't we be smarter about plastic in our state? Maybe tax plastic as a way to fund education, public transportation and help environmental justice communities like Chester. And raising the price of plastic is the best stimulus to reduce its use, find alternatives and keep it out of our waste streams.

The Mayor will speak on these impacts on Chester, but my perspective is that we have created a city unfairly burdened by pollution which has depressed home values and impacted the health and income of residents. This economic impact has also hurt their largest employer, Crozer Chester Medical Center whose adverse case mix led to its unfortunate sale to Prospect Medical Holdings and now teeters on bankruptcy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The political question is if you don't renew ReWorld's permit, what will we do with all the trash? We need to expand landfills and create a ten year plan on shrinking the waste stream. More incentives to reduce plastic, recycle electronics and construction materials, fix rather than throw things out, support home repairs, compost food and ever so slowly close Covanta.

Thank you for your time and attention to this pressing issue. I welcome any questions from the committee.

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