
Position of Alliance 90/The Greens belonging to disposal of waste

Dear Ms. Lambert,

Thank you for your request and your interest in our position belonging to the disposal of waste in landfill sites. As parliamentary group of Alliance90/The Greens in the German Bundestag our policy is evidently focussed on sustainability. And due to the disposal of waste in landfill sites we have an absolute clear position:

Disposing of waste in landfills is not a solution. It is the most unsustainable way of waste treatment and it is also not the cheapest way to get rid of waste. Landfill site deposition is just shifting problems and costs to next generations. Landfill sites are more or less black boxes with unpredictable processes and a burden for the future. Keywords are greenhouse gases, many other toxic emissions, danger of leaks, heavy metals etc... Therefore the minimum requirement is to treat waste before disposing of it. This is not only an effective protection of groundwater and soil, it is last but not least also an inexpensive reduction of greenhouse gas emissions e.g. methane. And of course: Treatment of waste before disposition is much cheaper than a remediation of a contaminated landfill site.

Therefore in Germany and Europe a lot of efforts are made to decrease the amount of waste being disposed in landfill sites. We from Alliance 90/The Greens are going even further. We want to close the loop for raw materials. Therefore we are campaigning to end the disposal of waste from human settlements on landfill sites until 2020 completely. This ambitious target presupposes the complete sorting and recovery of waste. This 2020 target is not an utopian goal, it is a realistic objective:

- waste can already be sorted fully automatically and the valuable substances can almost completely be recovered
- Sorting residues that are left over can be used to generate energy in waste incineration plants operated by very high standards. The different by-products of waste incineration can also be reused (for example the waste incineration facility in Hamburg at Rugenberger Damm)

For us it is not comprehensible, that waste disposal in landfill sites should bring a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by low costs. It is the opposite of the wide accepted knowledge in Europe and Germany, that recovery and treatment are essential elements of a sustainable waste and environmental policy.

Best regards

Alliance90/The Greens

cc: Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann, WRSI
