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## **The Incineration “Business Case”**

I could not but shake my head in utter disbelief as I read about the incineration “business case”. Under the pretense of an official document, it promotes the illusion, dare I say the fallacy, that the venture is financially attractive. Obviously, any project can be made to appear viable if sufficient factors are ignored.

It accomplishes this feat by failing to recognize, let alone account for, system externalities. Externalities are costs that are deemed to be non-existent, *i.e.* they are NOT factored in, thus giving the impression that an option is economically viable when, in fact, it is not.

Some of the most flagrant omissions are:

- supplemental health care cost;
- decreased productivity and increase in sick time;
- remedial therapies;
- TRUE COST of long-term storage and custody of toxic waste;
- location and cost of bottom ash landfills, including transportation;
- decreased marketability of agriculture and dairy products;
- traffic congestion, road damages, delays and remedial works;
- residential valuation and property taxes;
- external energy procurement;
- recycling revenues and consequences of “Put or Pay”;
- unavoidable plant outages;
- exposures to people and crops under system failure conditions;
- carbon equivalent cost;
- resource depletions;
- compliance with international agreements;
- financial viability, if any, of existing global operations.

There are also intangible costs associated with human life and personal suffering; no economic analysis, however sophisticated, can account for these. And this does not account for the fact that we will ALL unwillingly be poisoned, slowly but surely, by what we inhale and what we eat.

Attempting to rationalize the irrational is unconscionable for such a critical project; this augurs rather badly for our local and global legacy and we are dangerously fooling ourselves if we believe the conclusions of the “business case” review.

Obviously, mankind has enough technical savvy for self-destruction, but not enough brain to recognize it.

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