

## Bandung govt urged to scrap waste incinerator technology plans

The Bandung administration should review a tender awarded to a private-sector firm to develop a waste-based power plant (PLTSA), as the planned use of waste incineration technology to generate electricity is incommensurate with the character of waste in Bandung, says a conservationist. Global Alliance on Incinerator Alternatives member Yuyun Ismawati said that like other cities in Indonesia, waste in Bandung was predominantly “wet.” This wetness made incineration an inappropriate means of generating electricity — especially through boilers — since it would require extreme heat.

“This would mean burning water by using diesel fuel and coal, such that it’s not the waste that is being burned,” Yuyun said in Bandung on Friday. The Bandung administration, meanwhile, has been resolute about plans to construct a PLTSA in Gedebage, which lies to the east of the city. The decision was based on a meeting between Bandung Mayor Ridwan Kamil and the Bandung municipal consultative board in July this year. Bandung Environmental Management Agency head Eric M. Atthauriq said the government should begin preparing the tipping fee value — also known as waste management costs — or the power plant. Currently, the tipping fee amounts to Rp 37,000 per ton, or around Rp 66 billion annually. Daily production is estimated to be 700 tons.

“Apart from the tipping fee, in accordance with the mayor’s directives, we must be able to collaborate with the tender winner. A negotiation with the tender winner is necessary. Everything must be completed in two months, after which construction will commence,” Eric said. Together with the Chinese investor, Hangzhou Boiler Co. Ltd. the Bandung administration awarded the waste management tender to PT Bandung Raya Indah Lestari (BRIL). The decision was announced on July 23, 2013 through the national Development Planning Board (Bappenas). The tender winner was announced during the tenure of former mayor Dada Rosada. Dada is currently imprisoned at the Sukamiskin penitentiary for bribing a judge in a Bandung city-funds assistance scam. Bandung produces somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 tons of garbage each day. Currently, 1,200 tons of the waste is dumped at the Sarimukti landfill.

“The rest, which is strewn everywhere, would be sent to the Gedebage PLTSA,” said Eric, adding that the tipping fee at Sarimukti landfill stood at Rp 33,500 per ton, or Rp 13 billion annually. Yuyun emphasized that the tender agreement had taken place during the former mayor’s term and as such, suspicions that the agreement was laden with corruption were justified. “It should be revised by annulling the last decision,” she said. According to her, suspicions of foul play were also why she opposed current Mayor Ridwan’s plan to select PT BRIL to manage waste by applying the PLTSA technology. “The duty of the government is to protect, not poison the community [...] we should apply the anaerobic digester technology, which is more appropriate with the character of waste in Bandung, which is wet and could still be converted into energy,” said Yuyun. Another solution, added Yuyun, was managing waste from the source. Based on a study of community-based waste management systems in seven cities in Indonesia, waste sorting and composting reduced waste production by up to 50 percent.

“For compost that is left idle, the administration could buy it back to fertilize city parks. Such a mechanism should be introduced so that the volume of waste brought to the landfill can be reduced, thus prolonging its operational lifespan,” added Yuyun. Responding to the criticism, Ridwan Kamil said his administration would not hastily green-light the incinerator technology.

“It’s better to take a step backwards [if it means we can] get an optimal result,” Ridwan said on Sunday.