Dear Congressman Schiff:

This letter is written to you by a college student to address the problem that for some reason has failed to receive the proper attention over the years. Despite the fact that California is among the leading states in the country dealing with the problem, with all the latest technologies and existing programs, we still don’t seem to be doing well enough. This problem, if abandoned, encourages many bad tendencies in people such as wasteful approach, depleting of the natural resources, and ecological contamination.

I am talking about landfills. It is a shameful fact that they even exist in America. These big smelly toxic piles of wastes come as a result of consumers’ and unfortunately authorities’ carelessness. Hardly anyone bothers himself with a question of where the garbage ends up. And with the way we throw everything into one single waste basket, it can only go to one place: get transported to landfills. There it will rot, stink, take up space, and worst of all leak, poisoning the land down to layers of ground water reservoirs that we use for drinking. There is a lot of talk about recycling, and there are a lot of people practicing the wastes segregation, but there are even more of those who are completely unaware of the problem and its consequences. And you can’t blame anyone. There is not enough knowledge or resources to take the consistent steps in the right direction.

The landfill problem needs to be attacked from inside out. On one hand we need to educate the public starting from the school age (children are most perceptive and open to information: if they grow up with the right mindset, our future has a chance of looking a little brighter) about the route and final destination of garbage. One of the effective ways this can be done is through running messages on TV, like those speaking about “Flex the Power.” But the education alone won’t work. If you teach a person to segregate the garbage and recycle, you have to provide the means for him to do so. No one would want to create a trash station in his kitchen. There have to be separate bins for plastic, paper, glass, and metal materials in front of every building, residential or industrial. If it is not possible to set out a separate bin for each of the recyclable materials, there should at least be the collection days, especially for hazardous materials.

The public awareness would have a positive impact, but it would take time to kick in and deliver results; it a somewhat long-term goal. While this mechanism is being activated, another no less effective and more global way of eliminating landfills can be used. It kills two birds with one stone, cleaning up the landfills by converting our garbage into much needed more ecologically friendly fuel. This program has already proved its efficiency in Japan and Europe (where landfills are banned) that have advanced waste-to-energy facilities built and operating on their territories.

I was happy to learn that you support and are already working on utilizing the many sources of alternative fuels. It will positively impact our environment and economy, reducing the dependence on foreign fuels.
California is already among the leading states of correct wastes disposal. Hopefully, with your help it could become a state, leading the nation toward the better cleaner ecology for America.

Thank you for all your hard work and your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

Anna Karagiozova