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## **In Opposition to SB 451**

On behalf of **Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility:**

Chair Dembrow and Members of Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources:

In 2017 Covanta Marion released 160,843 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents into the atmosphere. The incinerator is the 20<sup>th</sup> largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG) in Oregon. Covanta Marion releases far more GHG into the atmosphere than a modern landfill like Coffin Butte while disposing of the same amount of solid waste. This is because at a landfill 74 to 81% of GHG remain sequestered indefinitely, and the GHG that are released occur gradually over decades. By contrast, at Covanta Marion, the release and dispersal of GHG from the stack is immediate upon burning. (SKY-FILL) No GHG are sequestered by the incinerator.

**Clearly, Covanta Marion does not provide clean, renewable energy, like solar and wind.** It should not receive exemptions under HB 2020, and it should not be awarded renewable energy credits under SB 451.

As a healthcare organization we are concerned that 10,000 tons of medical waste is imported from California and Washington and burned at the incinerator each year. Medical waste is high in plastics, produced from fossil fuels, and high in PVCs (polyvinyl chloride), which when heated and cooled in the burning process, creates and releases a whole family of highly toxic dioxins and furans. As you may recall, dioxins were the active ingredient in Agent Orange, that caused so much permanent harm to both Vietnamese civilians and American troops – cancer, birth defects, endocrine disruption, immune system suppression, and decreased fertility.

Another concern is that incinerating solid waste does not make it all magically disappear. One quarter of all the trash burned at Covanta Marion remains as a residue in the bottom ash and in the fly ash in the stack. These two ashes are a witch's brew of heavy metals, dioxins, and other toxic chemicals that must be buried in a landfill. So for every four trucks bringing waste to Covanta, one truck is leaving, filled with ash on its way to a landfill, and contributing to diesel pollution. Environmentally it makes far more sense to take municipal solid waste and most medical waste to the landfill in the first place.

Oregon PSR appreciates the hard work of this committee to try to reduce Oregon's carbon footprint and slow climate disruption. We know that tough decisions need to be made, but this is not one of them. We would **urge you not to award Covanta Marion renewable energy credits** under SB 451.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Board of Directors, Oregon Physicians for Social responsibility