



SB 451 IS AN MAJOR THREAT, OUR HIGHEST DESIGNATION FOR BILLS WE OPPOSE

May 13, 2019

Good afternoon Chair Burdick, Vice-Chair Baertschiger, and Committee Members:

For the record, I am Paige Spence, here on behalf of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on SB 451. On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters across Oregon, we would like to register our strong opposition to SB 451. During legislative sessions, OLCV works to promote policies that will ensure a better Oregon for our children – and to fight policies that do not.

We oppose the base bill, the -1 amendment, and the -2 amendment, which proposes to limit SB 451 by providing Renewable Energy Certificates to Covanta Marion's biogenic emissions and not to its anthropogenic emissions. Biogenic means emissions from biological materials, like cardboard and medical waste. Anthropogenic, or human-caused, means emissions from manmade sources like plastics. The resulting impact from both types of emissions is the same, and the -2 amendment does nothing to address our concerns. Both biogenic and anthropogenic emissions enter the atmosphere as greenhouse gases and have the same effect on climate change.

SB 451 offers some welcome clerical housekeeping by tidying up cross-referencing statutes, but also includes a significant policy change. SB 451 would enable Covanta, a facility that could have had the opportunity to register with WREGIS by that nearly decade-old deadline, an additional opportunity to try and generate Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). This bill if passed could displace RECs from new, non-emitting, actual renewable energy facilities. This amendment would do nothing to further the clean energy goals of the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), nor would it encourage additional investment in renewable energy in Oregon.

In 2016, Covanta Marion, a garbage burner emitted 160,517 metric tons of GHG pollution, presumably CO₂, making it #18 on the list of Oregon polluters. The only other solid waste disposal facility that emits more GHG pollution than Covanta Marion is the giant Waste Management Disposal Services landfill in Gilliam County, which is where garbage from the entire Portland metro area and elsewhere goes. There are 13 GHG emitters on the DEQ list in Marion County and Covanta Marion is by far the biggest polluter. In fact, it emits more than twice as much pollution than the other 12 combined. If you pass SB 451, you are making a policy decision that the pollution I just described is renewable energy. In our eyes, it is certainly not.

Burning garbage in Marion County not only leads to high levels of greenhouse gas pollution, it results in high garbage rates in Salem. A September 2017 study that was included in an October Salem City Council meeting agenda packet showed that Salem residents who live in Marion County paid the second highest garbage rates in the state (\$23.55 per month for weekly pickup of a 20 gallon trash container). West Salem residents pay less (\$18.10 for the same service) because tipping fees are less at the nearby Coffin Butte landfill, which is also far less polluting. If garbage haulers on the eastside in Salem were able to take trash to the Coffin Butte landfill, like haulers on the westside are able to do, residents could save over \$65 a year on their garbage bill and we could significantly reduce GHG pollution in Salem.

Like you, I have seen the emails and newspaper ads in which Covanta claims they would close and that instead Marion County's trash would be going in trucks up I-205. This is preposterous, given that Covanta has never relied on RECs to meet its bottom lines, and has not articulated what has changed now. SB 451 is bad for the environment, bad for public health, and bad for Oregonians' wallets. RECs are more appropriate for truly non-emitting, truly renewable sources of energy like wind and solar – not for garbage burning.

Thank you for considering your opposition to SB 451.

Paige Spence
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