



Senate Bill 451 *Employee Testimonials*

Don't trash my good, union job

By David Burckhardt

Twelve years ago I was scrambling to make ends meet with two part-time food service jobs when my dad told me to check out a job just posted at his plant. I was intrigued. Reliable hours. Union health and retirement benefits. A chance to build my career in renewable energy.

Other than the heads up, my dad didn't pull any strings. I got the job on my own merit and have worked for the Covanta Energy-from-Waste plant in Brooks ever since. Today I'm a control room operator, part of a team that oversees the conversion of Marion County's garbage into local, renewable energy for 9,000 homes each year.

I'm writing because I hear that some in the Oregon Legislature might be looking to shut down our plant. I want lawmakers to know about the benefits our plant provides, not just for me and my 43 coworkers (including my dad), but also for everyday Oregonians.

Let's start with the immediate consequences of shutting down the plant. More than 500 tons of waste that's processed at our plant each day would be loaded on semi-trucks and shipped more than 100 miles through the Gorge to a landfill in Eastern Oregon. Think the traffic is bad on I-5 today? Add more than 9,800 semi-truck loads on I-5 and I-84 each year.

Closing the plant means my dad, myself and more than 40 others would lose our family wage jobs. We'd also lose our good union health and retirement benefits.

Closing the plant means Marion County residents could potentially see higher garbage rates. That's because our county government would lose the revenues from the energy the plant generates. In the past, those dollars have been invested in county services and those dollars make it possible for Marion County to have some of the most innovative waste reduction and recycling programs in all of Oregon including Save the Food (food waste reduction) and Master Recycler training.

Additionally, our plant recovers 8,000 tons of metals each year. That's enough metal to build more than 6,500 cars.

Longer term, closing the plant would mean another 500 tons of waste added *every day* to regional landfills. Instead of producing energy, the buried waste produces methane that adds even more greenhouse gas emissions.

Instead of closing the plant, I urge my representatives in Salem to endorse Senate Bill 451, which would allow Covanta to receive renewable energy certificates from the state.

Rather than forfeiting good union jobs and dismantling one of the most progressive systems for handling solid waste and recycling in Oregon, I think lawmakers ought to be doing everything they can to support

a local energy resource that keeps garbage out of landfills, preserves land for higher use and eliminates greenhouse gas emissions.

Most people I talk to are glad to hear that our plant is a cleaner alternative to coal-fired plants. They appreciate that waste to energy facilities like ours are recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the European Union for mitigating greenhouse gases.

To me, recycling, recovery and renewable energy is what the Oregon environmental ethic is all about. I'm proud of the work my dad and I do. And I hope that my 4-year-old daughter will someday be proud of the contribution her dad and grandfather made to our state.

David Burckhardt works with his father, Ed Burckhardt, at the Covanta Energy-from-Waste plant in Brooks.

Don't add more trucks to I-5

From Troy Tulley

I live in Marion County and went to work at the Covanta Energy-from-Waste plant about a year and a half ago. It's a union job with family wages and good benefits. But one of the main reasons I went to work for Covanta is because I was tired of navigating the traffic to Portland.

Now I hear that Oregon lawmakers could let the plant close. While I and 52 others would be out of a good job, Oregonians would see a mess on the highways. The garbage now processed into energy at Covanta would need to travel by semi-truck more than 100 miles, through the Gorge to the landfill in Arlington.

We process as much as more than 500 tons a day. Without the plant, Oregonians would see more than 9,800 semi-loads added to I-5 every year. Do we want that? I know I don't.

Energy from Waste better than landfill

From Mike Keck

I have worked at the Covanta Energy from Waste plant in Brooks for more than two decades. I like my job and like talking to people about what I do. Most people drive by our plant off of I-5 and have no idea that every day we are turning as much as 500 tons of Marion County's garbage into energy. We recover 8,000 tons of metal every year, enough for 6,500 cars.

Isn't that better than sending 500 tons of garbage *every day* to the landfill? Covanta is one of the county's largest employers. It's important for Oregon lawmakers to support family wage, union jobs and the good work that we do for the environment.

Proud of what we do

From Troy Maxfield

I've worked for the Covanta Energy from Waste plant for 29 years. The employment office sent me there after I left the U.S. Navy and I never saw any reason to leave. Today I'm an operations foreman.

The people are great. The union wages and benefits are good. And the plant continues to become ever more efficient turning Marion County's garbage into clean energy. Our plant recycles metals that would otherwise have been sent to landfills.

I'm proud of the plant, my union coworkers and the environmentally responsible way we handle the county's waste. I invite our state lawmakers to come by for a tour.

Please support local jobs

From Ed Burckhardt

I've worked at the Covanta Energy-from-Waste plant for more than 15 years. It's been a good place to work. So good, in fact, that I urged my son to join me at the plant.

The thing I appreciate the most is being able to earn union wages right here in Marion County. I'm close to home and family and I don't have to make long commutes into Portland to work.

I urge my legislators to do the right thing and pass Senate Bill 451, which would protect our plant and our jobs.

Best place for our garbage to go

From Todd Hatfield

I've worked at the Covanta Waste from Energy plant in Brooks for 32 years. At 63, I'm the oldest among my union brothers. The youngest is 21.

This has been a great place to work and to raise my family. That's why I'm not happy to hear that a bill pending in the Oregon Legislature threatens my job as well as the plant. It makes no sense.

Every day, Covanta turns 500 tons of Marion County's garbage into clean energy. Would it be better to send that garbage up I-5 in semi-trucks through the Gorge and to the landfill, where it will rot and emit greenhouse gasses? I don't think so.

Are we really going to stop making garbage? I don't think so. At least not anytime soon. The Covanta plant is a good solution. And, in my opinion, a far better option than either landfills or generating energy from coal.

Save Marion County jobs

From Peter Alayon

I have worked for 2 ½ years at the Covanta Energy-from-Waste plant in Brooks, where I am a utility operator. It's a good job with good pay and benefits.

Every day I see as much as 500 tons of garbage come into our plant and converted to energy. Most people have no idea how much waste there is or what happens to it. I am proud of the role I play to manage our waste and improve our environment.

I ask Oregon legislators to do everything they can to support me, my coworkers, and the jobs we do.