



April 22, 2021

TO: The Honorable Pam Marsh, Chair  
House Committee on Energy and Environment

FROM: David Howe  
Public Health Division  
Oregon Health Authority

SUBJECT: OHA Radiation Protection Services,, Radioactive Material Disposal

Chair Marsh and members of the committee, I am David Howe, Program Director for Radiation Protection Services (RPS), Center for Health Protection in the Public Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on the role that Radiation Protection Services has in management of radioactive waste.

The RPS mission is to promote the health and safety of Oregonians by protecting them from unnecessary exposure to radiation and its beneficial use. A part of our charge is to regulate the use and possession of radioactive materials by licensing medical, industrial, academic and research entities. Radioactive waste that is unwanted or unusable is considered a subset of radioactive material.

When RPS is notified about potential radiation waste from an unknown (unlicensed) source or location, our agency works with entities to identify, characterize, and evaluate it for any public health safety concerns. RPS provides guidance regarding handling, storage and appropriate disposal means.

If radioactive waste is determined to not be a public health safety concern, disposal occurs through a conventional waste stream pathway. RPS Oregon Administration Rules Chapter 333, Divisions 117 and 120 address radioactive waste disposal and disposal/transfer of radioactive material from one licensed entity to another.

Radioactive material that is below exempt quantities does not require licensure. RPS works in conjunction with the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) to confirm if radioactive waste meets pathway exemption conditions set forth in ODOE revised statutes and administrative rules.

For radioactive waste that constitutes being a health risk and does not meet ODOE exemption requirements, the entity must either use a licensed radioactive waste disposal broker or return the radioactive waste to its point of origin for identification, characterization, and proper disposal. RPS authorizes radiation waste transport in commerce by highway or rail shipment through issuance of a special U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) permit.

RPS would be pleased to provide the committee with additional information as needed.