

Submitter: Sophia Rosenberg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure: SB488

To: Senate Energy and Environment Committee
From: Sophia Rosenberg, Willamette University
Re: Closing the Medical Waste Loophole SB 488

Chair Sollman; Vice Chair Findley; and members Sen. Golden, Sen. Hayden and Sen. Lieber of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee

My name is Sophia Rosenberg, and I live in Salem Oregon as a student at Willamette University. I am writing in solidarity with Beyond Toxics, PCUN, 350 Salem, OEC, and others in support of SB 488.

I am writing to you today in support of SB 488, The Medical Waste Incinerator Act to close the loophole that allows the Covanta Incinerator in Brooks, Oregon to burn excess amounts of medical waste under municipal waste instead of medical waste regulations.

I cannot explain how important and urgent the issue of regulating the Covanta Marion Incinerator is. As a student studying environmental science, and as someone who lives near the facilities, I am subjected to the pollution from Covanta. I understand how dangerous this pollution is for my health, and the health of our ecosystems. This is a matter of environmental racism; Covanta Marion incinerator is located in a low-income, Latina/o community. Within a five mile radius of Covanta Marion the demographics include significantly more people of color and poorer people: 79% People of color (vs all of Oregon is 24% of color), 55% low income (vs all of Oregon is 33% low income) within a five mile radius of Covanta Marion (Lisa Arkin, Beyond Toxics Webinar 2/6/2023).

Waste incinerators like Covanta Marion are dirtier than coal, and are simply unacceptable. Oregon can do better! Covanta is creating massive amounts of toxic pollution not only to the air, but to soil, rivers, water, and in the form of highly concentrated toxic ash that directly harms wildlife and human health. The amount of lead polluted by Covanta is 7.5 times higher than the federal limit for a medical waste incinerator. Mercury emissions are 2.6 times over the federal limit.

Oregon is being taken advantage of. Covanta Marion is burning out of state medical waste for profit to Covanta, and creates pollution from this out of state waste that

directly affects Oregon's land. People like me are exposed to Covanta's toxic pollution with no benefit. I urge you to pass SB 488 in the 2023 legislative session to ensure that the loop hole is closed and that Oregon does not become a dumping ground for other states' waste.

Thank you for your time and for your vote in support of SB 488 to close the Covanta Marion Medical Waste Loophole.