

Submitter: Renna Anderson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure: SB488

To: Senate Energy and Environment Committee
From: Renna Anderson
Re: Closing the Medical Waste Loophole SB 488

Chair Sollman; Vice Chair Findley; and members Sen. Golden, Sen. Hayden, and Sen. Lieber,

My name is Renna Anderson, and I live in Salem, Oregon. I am currently a student at Willamette university, and I have only known about the Covanta incinerator for a short time, but it has been affecting my entire life as an Oregonian.

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.

The toxins it releases daily invades the air that my loved ones and myself breath, leaving us at risk for numerous adverse health effects, with cancer being one of them. Every citizen of Oregon deserves clean air, but that will not happen if the incinerator is allowed to continuously pump toxins out of its burners beyond EPA limits. The incinerator currently emits 7.5 times more lead than the federal limit for medical waste incinerators, according to DEQ reports. That being said, even though it is classified as a municipal waste incinerator, an increasing amount of its trash is non-municipal, more specifically, medical waste from out-of-state. Additionally, even though it produces energy for 6,000 houses, it is extremely expensive energy, and it primarily goes to homes in Portland and out of state. The Covanta incinerator is causing much more harm than the miniscule benefits, but SB 488 could stop this by simply classifying it as a medical waste incinerator, and as an effect, force it to comply with federal regulations surrounding emissions and co-pollutants.

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,
Renna Anderson