

To: Senate Energy and Environment Committee  
From: Jeanne Roy, 6805 SW 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, Portland, OR 97219  
Date: March 2, 2023  
Subject: SB 488, Medical Waste Incineration

I strongly favor the passage of SB 488. Ever since I served on a DEQ advisory committee on air quality, I have had a particular concern about the toxic emissions from incinerators.

Covanta Marion burns approximately 14,000 tons of in-state and out-of-state medical waste on an annual basis. In recent years, this incinerator has steadily increased the amount of out-of-state hospital and medical waste it burns.

Burning medical waste, which is often plastics such as PVC, is known to emit more toxic pollutants than standard municipal waste. For example, dioxins are formed when organic materials (e.g., wood and paper) are burned in the presence of chloride products (e.g., PVCs from medical waste plastics). Dioxins are carcinogenic, cause birth defects, disrupt endocrine systems, suppress the immune system, and decrease fertility. The medical waste is a significant contributor to the toxic air emissions that are many times over the amount that the U.S. EPA allows for a large new medical waste incinerator.

SB 488 will close a regulatory loophole in Oregon's air quality laws that allows a municipal waste (trash) incinerator to burn large amounts of medical and industrial waste. Federal regulations for medical waste incinerators are far stricter than those for municipal waste incinerators. However, EPA regulations allow an incinerator classified as a "municipal waste incinerator" to burn significant amounts of medical waste without being held to the much stricter medical waste incinerator emissions limits.

To protect the health of Oregon residents living downwind from the incinerator, this loophole must be closed.