

Submitter: Laurie Dougherty

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB488

Chair Hollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and members of the Committee,

My name is Laurie Dougherty. I live in Salem. I support SB 488 requiring that a “municipal solid waste incinerator that accepts more than specified amounts of hospital, medical or infectious waste in calendar year to meet federal emissions limits for hospital, medical or infectious waste incinerator.”

Covanta Marion is designated a municipal solid waste incinerator; however, it also burns large amounts of medical waste, much of it trucked in from other states. Medical waste contains high proportions of plastic which generates dangerously toxic emissions including dioxin and heavy metals. Medical waste incinerators are rightly subject to stricter emissions regulations than municipal waste incinerators. Due to the amount of medical waste it burns and the toxic emissions it produces, Covanta Marion must be regulated according to the stricter controls applied to medical waste incinerators.

Residents in the lower income communities and farmworkers in the fields around Covanta Marion are subject to the toxic emissions from the incinerator. This is an environmental justice issue. The weaker regulatory regime for municipal waste makes Oregon a dumping ground for highly toxic medical waste. This is a shame.

I urge you to support SB 488 to apply the appropriate emission standards to incineration of medical waste in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.