



Marion County

OREGON

Board of Commissioners

March 7, 2023

(503) 588-5212
(503) 588-5237-FAX

Senator Janeen Sollman, Chair
Senator Lynn Findley, Vice Chair

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Colm Willis, Chair
Kevin Cameron
Danielle Bethell

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Jan Fritz

RE: Marion County Opposes SB 488

Dear Chair Senator Sollman, Vice-Chair Senator Findley, and Members of the Committee:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners write in opposition to SB 488, which would require municipal solid waste incinerators that accept more than specified amounts of hospital, medical or infectious waste in calendar year to meet federal emissions limits for hospital, medical or infectious waste incinerators. SB 488 Will not reduce emissions, but it will drive up the cost of healthcare and contribute to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

For more than 20 years the waste management company Covanta has been processing Regulated Medical Waste (RMW) in Marion County. During its many years of operation, the Covanta Marion Facility has continued to process RMW safely and within the high standards of state and federal regulations for combustion facilities. In 2020, a preliminary health risk assessment performed by a third party found the Covanta Marion facility risk levels were below relevant action levels.

The next closest medical waste incinerator facility is in Kansas City, KS. That facility has a capacity of 6,570 tons, about one-third of the capacity of the Marion County facility, and is over 1,800 miles from Brooks, Oregon. Shipping RMW across the country would have significant fiscal impact to medical facilities in Oregon and across the surrounding region. These operational costs would most likely be passed down to the patients of those medical facilities. Additionally, the in-state generated RMW would have to be shipped out of state, significantly increasing truck traffic and GHG emissions.

Over 99.9 percent of what comes out of our Covanta's Marion Facility stack is what would typically be found in the air: water vapor, nitrogen, oxygen, and carbon dioxide. The remaining constituents are well below federal and state standards. Covanta's Marion County Solid Waste-to-Energy Facility is a cornerstone for the waste managements of the county. It serves the more than 300,000 residents of Marion County with reliable and sustainable waste management.

BOC: AMK

The Marion County Board of Commissioners urges the committee to vote no on SB 488. Thank you for your time, consideration, and hard work.

Sincerely,



Colm Willis
Chair



Kevin Cameron
Commissioner



Danielle Bethell
Commissioner