

March 09, 2023

Dear Chairs and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 488.

Stricter and more thorough monitoring of the Covanta Incinerator emissions is long overdue, especially since it is burning ever larger amounts of medical waste and plastic waste. It is well known that there are significant health issues due to air pollution with so many documented “toxic ingredients”; these include CO₂, CO, fine particulates, heavy metals, etc. The health effects include asthma and irreversible lung disease, atherosclerotic heart disease, strokes, brain damage to children, etc.

I would add that the Covanta emissions pollution is not just local, but is almost certainly up and down the Willamette Valley and statewide.

The following statements support that statement. It has been shown that under certain conditions, i.e. with westerlies, air pollution from China is detectable on the West Coast of our country. Likewise heavy metals, e.g. lead, are found in the polar ice caps, dating all the way back to when humanity started to smelt ore to extract lead.

I recently learned that Covanta continues to incinerate even when we have atmospheric inversion creating high and unhealthy levels of air pollution in the Willamette Valley. I have little doubt that their waste emissions contribute to this pollution.

Thus, there is every reason to hold Covanta’s emissions to a higher Federal standard. I urge this committee to ensure that SB 488 moves on to the Senate floor.

Thanks for your work on this issue.

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