

Submitter: Ria Martinez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Support 488A - Modernize Air Quality Monitoring

Chairs Steiner and Sanchez; Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg and Smith; Members of the Committee:

My name is Ria Martinez and I live in Salem, by the Capitol and I am writing in support of SB 488A.

SB 488A invests a relatively small amount of money for a pilot project to test continuous air toxics emissions monitoring and reporting at the Covanta Marion waste incineration facility north of Salem.

The Covanta Marion incinerator is the nation's 4th largest medical waste incinerator. Ninety percent of this medical waste was trucked here from out-of-state, primarily California, Washington, and Canada. This makes Oregon the target of plastics waste and the resulting pollution that other states don't want released into their air and watersheds. Covanta is almost 40 years old and much of its pollution control and monitoring equipment is "grandfathered in" under what are now outdated emissions monitoring rules. Most pollutants are tested just once a year, which is a momentary snapshot of the facility's operations.

SB 488A gives us data obtained by modern pollution monitoring technologies to protect our health and the environmental justice community downwind of Covanta. Many of the people who live nearest to the incinerator are part of rural, BIPOC and agricultural communities in the mid-Willamette Valley. They are bearing the burden of unknown amounts of heavy metals, dioxins and acids resulting from the burning of medical and municipal waste.

It is crucial that we invest in SB 488A so that the DEQ can fulfill its duty to carry out the Cleaner Air Oregon regulations. The relatively small amount of money requested by the agency is needed for essential work to continue. I ask for your support of SB 488A.