

Submitter: Jim Scheppke

On Behalf Of: 350 Salem OR

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB488

5/31/2023

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Dembrow and Representative Pham and members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources,

On behalf of 350 Salem OR we urge the Subcommittee on Natural Resources to support SB 488A along with the -7 amendment to provide funding for the DEQ to implement the pilot project to test continuous air toxics emissions at the Covanta Marion incinerator.

While 350 Salem members are primarily concerned with the high levels of greenhouse gas emissions from the Covanta Marion facility, we are equally concerned with toxic emissions which we believe pose a potential health risk to all of us living in the vicinity of the facility.

We believe that for decades, emissions from the facility have never been adequately monitored. SB 488A has the potential to change that by undertaking a pilot test of continuous air toxics emissions monitoring technology. We are pleased that DEQ is willing to do this in keeping with their regulatory mandate to measure the level of toxic air emissions.

350 Salem OR views this as an environmental justice issue. Covanta Marion is now the 4th largest medical waste incinerator in the U.S. Medical waste incinerators emit highly toxic air pollutants including heavy metals, dioxins and particulate matter, hydrogen chloride, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen. Exposure to heavy metals can lead to learning disabilities, lowered IQ, and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children. Dioxin is linked with cancer and birth defects. We need to begin to assess the risk to the low-income communities of color that live in the immediate vicinity of the incinerator.

SB 488A will not affect the ability to properly dispose of medical or municipal waste. It will begin to accurately and reliably provide for continuous emissions monitoring for greater environmental and public health protections.

We will appreciate your support.

Jim Scheppke, Member

350 Salem OR