

Submitter: Jim Scheppke

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1067

Dear Chair Sollman and Members of the Committee:

As a Salem resident since 1986, I am a strong supporter of SB 1067 which would give my city back the authority over where my garbage is taken for disposal.

Since I moved here, my garbage has been taken, at the direction of Marion County, to the Covanta (now Reworld) incinerator in Brooks where it was burned, emitting CO2 and harmful toxins to pollute the air. According to 2022 data from the DEQ, nearly 155,000 metric tons of carbon pollution was emitted from the incinerator that year. If we assume a similar amount was emitted over the 38 years the incinerator was in operation, that would mean that the incinerator was responsible for 5.9 million metric tons of carbon pollution over its lifetime — a terrible legacy for anyone who cares about the Climate Crisis and the survival of our species and other species. I am sad that my garbage contributed to that.

And over those 38 years the low-income, mostly Latino community of Brooks, where the incinerator is located, just on the edge of town, was a sacrifice zone. Children and families and seniors and everyone was forced to breathe air tainted with lead, mercury, dioxin, PFAS, and other harmful chemicals. Moss studies in the vicinity of the incinerator that were conducted by the US Forest Service and reported in November 2024 proved this.

What does this have to do with SB 1067?

Marion County, which received a portion of the tipping fees from the incinerator, would love to restart it. The incinerator is still operational and could be restarted at any time. Recently a French company, Veolia, took over a Reworld incinerator in Vancouver, BC. The same thing could happen here, and Salem citizens like myself could do nothing to stop it. Once again my garbage would be polluting the air and harming the children in Brooks.

That is why I thank Senator Patterson and Representative Gamba for sponsoring SB 1067 and I urge you to pass the bill out of your committee without delay.

Jim Scheppke
Salem