

To: Senate Energy and Environment Committee  
From: Lauren Meekins  
Re: Closing the Medical Waste Loophole SB 488

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Findley, and members Sen. Golden, Sen. Hayden, and Sen. Lieber of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee:

My name is Lauren Meekins and I live at Willamette University in the student dormitories.

I am writing to you today in support of SB 488, The Medical Waste Incinerator Act, to close the loophole that allows the Covanta Incinerator in Brooks, Oregon to burn excess amounts of medical waste under municipal waste instead of medical waste regulations.

I urge you to pass SB 488 in the 2023 legislative session to ensure that the loop hole is closed and that Oregon does not become a dumping ground for other states' waste. **European investors** who own Covanta are profiting off of the fact that they are currently, with this loophole, able to use **Oregon as a dumping ground for waste imported from other states and countries causing intensive pollution**. They are **treating Oregonians and their wellbeing as expendable**, a sacrifice they are willing to make in trying to make ever more **money off of buying dangerous medical waste that is not even our own**.

I spend the majority of my time living and learning here in Salem, and I am appalled at how Covanta Marion is pushing out harmful chemicals into the air, with **led emissions at 7.5 times the acceptable federal limit** and **mercury emissions at 2.6 times the federal limit**. The incinerator is **worse than coal**, and the energy it is producing is not even going to Brooks or other local communities. It's powering other big cities elsewhere. **Why are we putting the burden of pollution on the elementary age kids that attend a school within sight of Covanta**, why are we **forcing our small businesses, our farms, our food production, and our children to suffer from a greedy company** that is **using a loophole in the law to make the maximum amount of money?**

**Covanta has a responsibility to start to be a better neighbor**, to see that what they do affects Oregonians, that it affects the very air that we breathe. **We all share the air, and we all have a stake in trying to keep it clean. This bill will implement the necessary regulations to close the loophole to protect our community's air, health, and wellbeing from the excess pollution currently allowed under law.**

Lauren Meekins  
Salem, OR