

Chair Sollman; Vice Chair Findley; and members Sen. Golden, Sen. Hayden, and Sen. Lieber,

My name is Aaron Nolan, and I live in Salem, Oregon.

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.

Medical waste regulations will result in cleaner air for the local population. The toxic chemicals emitted into the air can have devastating effects. Cleaner air will reduce the impacts to the human brain and body, limiting the exposure to various schools, with students as young as preschool, as well as two college campuses. By allowing Covanta to create an excess of pollution not only to the air, but to the soil, rivers, and water affects human health and the health of the local environment and wildlife.

Focus needs to be placed upon the children's health as they are the future of this State. The harmful consequences to children's health can include: neurocognitive disorders, behavioral disorders, respiratory problems, cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Covanta has a responsibility to be good neighbors to the community and to comply with medical waste standards. This bill will help implement the necessary regulations for it to do so. We all breathe the same air and this air won't clean itself. This is something that affects all of us. It particularly affects the poor (55% low income) and people of color (79% people of color) as they are the demographics closest in proximity. This therefore also raises issues of environmental justice, and protecting those that are disproportionately impacted by an excess of pollution.

As the regulations for Covanta Marion stand right now, Oregonians and their wellbeing are being treated as expendable. We are being used as a dumping ground for waste imported from other states and countries due to this loophole. Covanta is profiting off of this fact, and is willing to sacrifice our health and the health of our community, so that they may profit by buying dangerous medical waste that is not even our own. For the aforementioned reasons, I am strongly in favor of SB 488.

Aaron Nolan
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