



Marion County

OREGON

Board of Commissioners

Marion County Commissioner Kevin Cameron
House Committee on Energy & Environment
Testimony in support of HB 4049
February 6, 2020

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**BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

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For more than 30 years, Marion County has been in partnership to provide solid waste management, recovery and recycling services to the more than 350,000 residents of Marion County.

We are extremely proud of Marion County's innovative and comprehensive solid waste management system that includes production of electricity from municipal solid waste (MSW) through the Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facility located in Brooks, Oregon.

The Brooks EfW facility has been a key component of Marion County's overall waste reduction and recycling strategies.

Not only does the partnership allow Marion County to achieve one of the highest recovery rates in Oregon, but electricity generated from the energy-from-waste facility powers 9,000 homes.

Revenues received from the energy produced at the EfW facility helps support the county's recycling efforts. In addition to the curbside mixed recycling roll cart, the county maintains value added programs such as the Master Recycler and EarthWISE programs which help residents and businesses implement environmentally friendly practices.

Marion County provides convenient curbside recycling for mixed organics, household batteries, paint, used motor oil, antifreeze, and cooking oil – items which are not being recycled curbside in many other communities.

People have the misconception that recycling is free. Marion County subsidizes a number of recycling programs. For example: annual cost for battery recycling is \$100,000; household hazardous waste cost is \$425,000; and recycling of florescent light bulbs cost is \$50,000.

Just a few short years ago, Oregon legislators deemed energy-from-waste a renewable energy, as part of the Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS).

- In 2010, the Oregon legislature enacted legislation (SB 1547) allowing Renewable Energy Certificates generated by *new or expanded* energy-from-waste facilities to count toward the state's RPS. In 2010 the only energy-from-waste plant operating in Oregon was the Covanta Marion plant – which remains true today.
- In 2016, with bipartisan support, the Oregon legislature granted energy-from-waste full renewable status, making it eligible to sell Renewable Energy Credits as authorized under the 2010 RPS law.
- The 2016 law, however, failed to specifically address a requirement that the energy-from-waste plant be registered with the Western Renewable Energy Generation Information System (WREGIS) prior to a 2011 deadline. The facility did not register because it had not been explicitly eligible to sell REC's under the original 2010 law.
- EfW is a technology that has been recognized as 100% renewable in 30 states, the District of Columbia, and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

If this legislation does not pass, there is a very real chance the Marion County partnership with the Brooks EfW facility will end. Currently, we have a one year contract extension that ends September 20, 2020. Marion County is in limbo until we have a legislative determination.

For decades, Marion County has been a leader in solid waste and recovery in Oregon and the United States. The EfW facility has been an integral component in our overall waste management strategy for more than 30 years. Since its opening, the EfW facility has served our community well by:

- Generating enough electricity to power 9,000 homes annually;
- Recovering enough ferrous metal to build more than 100,000 cars versus burying it in the ground and impacting our water sources in the future and:
- Generating electricity from 500 tons of municipal solid waste daily equating to 4.3 million tons or 8.73 billion pounds of MSW over the last 30 years;
 - Resulting in a saving of more than 45 acres of valuable farm land from being developed into landfills.

In addition, Marion County just completed a countywide survey where ***Marion County residents overwhelmingly supported and preferred our current method of garbage disposal through the Energy-from-Waste facility and generating electricity*** over landfilling.

This is truly a Marion County issue, not a statewide issue, and we need your help to make a statutory technical fix required by the Oregon Department of Energy. If we are able to sell these REC's, the Marion County solid waste system will continue moving forward with financial resources to engage in innovative solid waste management and remain a national leader.

We urge your support of HB 4049 for the residents of Marion County.