

THINK OUT LOUD

Marion County's move from incineration to landfill illustrates the problems with both methods of trash disposal

By **Allison Frost** (OPB)Jan. 7, 2025 6 a.m. **Updated:** Jan. 7, 2025 1:14 p.m.**Broadcast: Tuesday, Jan. 7**

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Since the mid-1980s, Marion county has been [sending its trash to an incinerator](#), now known as [Reworld Marion Inc.](#) It's the only one in the state, and the county has partnered with it from from the beginning. The company recently filed objections with Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality around environmental regulations the state passed aimed at improving human health by reducing toxic emissions from the facility. Several months ago Reworld announced [it would be closing](#) its Oregon facility and [would not be accepting any more trash](#) as of Dec. 31, 2024.

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In this undated photo provided by Beyond Toxics, Reworld Marion Inc waste incinerator is pictured in Brooks, Oregon. It is the state's only such facility and the only one on the entire West Coast that accepts medical waste.

Courtesy Beyond Toxics

The county had to turn instead to the Coffin Butte Landfill in neighboring Benton County. But that landfill is filling up and has applied to expand its capacity. It's also been under [scrutiny for methane leaks](#) that environmental groups, lawmakers and regulators say have not been adequately addressed.

Joining us to discuss the problems inherent in current waste disposal methods are: Lisa Arkin, the executive director of [Beyond Toxics](#), which is part of the state's Clean Air Coalition; and [Oregon State Senator Sara Gelsler Blouin](#), a Democrat whose district covers South Salem and unincorporated parts of Linn, Benton and Marion Counties.

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