

**From:** [Hillary Egna](#)  
**To:** [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)  
**Subject:** comment to BC on landfill process  
**Date:** Friday, January 30, 2026 11:10:20 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Commissioners and anyone else involved,

I am writing because what was once a local, accountable public process in Benton County now clearly shows signs of **public capture**.

It is no longer credible to claim that the relationship between Benton County and Republic Services hasn't influenced county decisions. Funding arrangements, staffing choices, and county-commissioned analyses repeatedly push in the same direction: justifying Republic Services' continued presence while downplaying or reframing environmental and community impacts. That is not independent oversight. It is alignment.

You may assume the public does not notice. I assure you, we do.

The situation becomes even clearer when you consider Republic Services' choice to retain Miller Nash, a law firm known for its aggressive defense of industrial clients. That's a deliberate signal. Organizations confident in independent review and broad public support do not usually deploy that level of legal force. They do it when they intend to hold ground and deter challenge.

Meanwhile, county reports and official justifications consistently highlight cost savings and job preservation in ways that favor the regulated entity. At the same time, environmental impacts, increased risk, and erosion of public trust fall on the community. I have seen this pattern before: public capture rarely announces itself as wrongdoing. It creeps in through repeated, routine decisions that gradually pull public institutions away from independent judgment.

Benton County's decline over the past decades didn't happen by accident. It reflects choices that prioritized comfort and corporate accommodation over transparency, environmental stewardship, and the public interest. Leadership that tolerates this pattern is failing the community. Public service is not about preserving convenience or protecting powerful interests—it is about doing what is right. I hope county leadership remembers that before more trust is lost.

Sincerely,  
Hillary Egna  
Benton County resident for over 40 years

PS Your process has become so uninviting and cumbersome. Send my letter to where it makes the most sense and impact. Please.

--