

From: [Debbie P](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: testimony for LU-24-027 Reconsideration Hearing on DEQ Pre-enforcement Notice
Date: Monday, January 26, 2026 8:51:56 AM
Attachments: [Predatory Delay and the Rights of Future Generations.pdf](#)

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Dear Commissioners,

I wish to point out that the DEQ Pre-enforcement Notice is effectively PROOF, finally, of what people in VNEQS and the larger community have been trying to tell you for years now.

Republic Services (via their subsidiary Valley Landfills), in our opinion, is a bad actor, has been a bad actor for a long time, and their word is not to be trusted. The DEQ Notice supports this opinion, makes this glaringly clear.

They engage in classic tactics used by the Tobacco Industry, the Oil and Gas Industry and the Chemical Agriculture industry... intentionally distract, cast doubt and spread disinformation, and make repeated use of *Predatory Delay* - which is not the absence of action, but rather the deliberate slowing of needed change to prolong a profitable but unsustainable status quo whose costs will be paid by others.*

Like the Tobacco, Oil and Gas, and Chemical Agriculture industries, they profit handsomely by externalizing their costs at the expense of the environment and our health.

So I THANK YOU for withdrawing your original decision in order to reconsider it in light of this DEQ notice. Now is your opportunity to do something FOR your community, your constituents, the environment, and the future instead of bowing to the pressure (and threats?) of a corporate giant.

Ample, persuasive legal argument and evidence, complete with the necessary references to County Code and Land Use Criteria will be provided to you in written testimony in this open record period.

PLEASE use it to defend your decision to DENY LU-24-027.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Palmer
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*Predatory Delay is a concept coined by futurist Alex Steffen (see attached PDF for detailed explanation).

Predatory Delay and the Rights of Future Generations

Alex Steffen

Apr 29, 2016



We owe the future.

People who will be alive in the future can make ethical claims on us. We have duties to them. They have rights.

Some people seem to have a hard time even understanding the concept of the rights of future generations. The idea that people who do not yet exist have the right to assert their needs in our lives is one that seems to be hard to fully grasp.

Think of this example: If someone sets a bomb to go off in a public square a year from now, is he committing a crime? Should he be stopped? Almost everyone would say yes. Should he be tried before a court of law and prevented from doing further harm? Most of us would agree that he should. What about ten years? What about 100? When does our obligation to avoid serious, predictable harm to others end?

Now, here's the tricky part: climate emissions (and huge array of other unsustainable practices) are the bomb, and your grandkids and great-grandkids are the victims.

By transgressing [planetary boundaries](#), we are seriously (and in human timescales, permanently) undermining the ability of the planet to provide the kind of climate stability, natural bounty and renewable resources that future generations will need to maintain their own societies. If we continue business as usual, we are in fact dooming millions of them to extreme suffering and early death. Life on a hotter, dangerous and destabilized planet is not something we would wish to have inflicted on ourselves.

We don't really have the ethical right to inflict it on our descendants. There is no legitimate basis for thinking that we have the right to use the planet up, that the property rights of current generations trump the human rights of the next 100 generations to come.

Put it another way: ethically, with riches come responsibilities. Much of the wealth around us was handed down as a legacy by our ancestors, and we hold the planet itself in trust, as stewards.

As long as we don't use more of the planet's bounty than can be sustainably provided in perpetuity, we have the ethical right to enjoy the best lives we can create. But the minute we stray into unsustainable levels of consumption, we're not in fact spending our own riches, but those of future people, by setting in motion disasters that will greatly diminish their possibilities. Unfortunately, nearly everyone living a middle class or wealthier lifestyle now enriches their lives at the cost of future generations. As Paul Hawken says, "We have an economy where we steal the future, sell it in the present, and call it G.D.P."

Now, obviously, most of us did not intend to find ourselves in this situation, and so for a couple decades we had a legitimate argument that we needed a reasonable amount of time to change our ecological impact. It's become clear that many of our leaders' definition of a *reasonable* amount of time, though, is for things to change sometime after they're dead.

This is what I mean when I say that we have a politics of "**predatory delay**." Many wealthy people understand that their profits are extracted through destructively unsustainable practices, and they've known it for decades. By and large, they no longer deny the need for change, they simply argue for delay, on the basis that to change *too quickly* would be unfair to them.

This allows them to be seen as responsible and caring. They want change, they claim; they just think we need prudent, appropriately paced change, mindful of economic trade-offs and judiciously studied — by which they mean cosmetic change for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, they fight like hell to delay change of any real magnitude, attacking not only the prospects of our kids and kin in the future, but increasingly of our society in the present. Their

delay has real, serious human consequences, across generations. They're taking, not creating; the harm they cause is measurable.

Tim O'Reilly, in 2012, turned this nice phrase: "Policy should protect the future from the past, not the past from the future." Yet in every country on Earth, [policies made at the top are still overwhelmingly designed not to meet our planetary crisis at the scale and speed it demands, but to protect the institutions, companies and systems causing that crisis from disruptive change](#). This is true at every scale, from large incumbent industries unfairly undermining newer, more sustainable competitors to wealthy NIMBY property owners blocking new housing in cities around the world so that they can benefit from the housing crisis by pushing real estate prices as high as possible before they sell.

The next time you hear a powerful person arguing against needed action in the name of prudence or process or tradition, ask yourself, "*Am I hearing the voice of predatory delay?*"

We owe it to the future to call it what it is.

<https://medium.com/@AlexSteffen/predatory-delay-and-the-rights-of-future-generations-69b06094a16>