

From: [Hiram James McLendon, Jr.](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: WEB FORM SUBMISSION - LU-24-027 Coffin Butte Proposed Expansion Written Testimony
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Subject of Testimony: Coffin Butte Landfill

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Written Testimony:

My wife and I have lived in Corvallis, OR, since 1996, and we have been so happy to live in such a wonderful natural environment and community. We had lived previously in big eastern cities, Boston and New York City, and we felt blessed being able to breathe fresh air and enjoy the vibrant community of people who love living in such a wonderful place as Corvallis.

We used to drive from Corvallis to Portland for visits, and we were always shocked at the terrible smells that hit us as we drove north along I-5 just north of Albany, near the exit for Millersburg where the paper mill (the town was, not surprisingly, named for the mill) was located on the west side of the highway.

Each time we drove through that area, for about a mile or more, we had to roll up our windows and hold our breath as we passed through the obnoxious odors that filled the air around the paper mill.

Each time that we endured that ordeal, my wife and I would ask each other how anyone could bear to live within a mile of that smelly mill spewing its disgusting chemical-laden air onto the people who live in the vicinity.

This experience always reminds me of my two experiences when I was serving in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War and went to Tyndale AFB in Panama City, Florida, to attend training schools (in the Florida panhandle) for two to three weeks at a time. There was a paper mill just across the bay from the base, and no one on the base could escape the oppressive smell of the chemicals filling the air around the base.

The EPA's reports have confirmed that Coffin Butte Landfill has not been in compliance with agreements, regulations, and rules for years. Promises made on numerous occasions by Republic over the years have been ignored by Republic, figuring that nobody would dare to mess with such a gigantic corporation and that they could pollute the air in Benton County and surrounding areas freely and without penalty.

I think the corporate leaders figured that they themselves don't have to live in Corvallis or surrounding areas, and too bad for the folks that are stuck living there. "Too bad for those poor slobbs!" has probably been the prevailing sentiment at Republic as they poison the air for the residents of Benton county.

We have owned a lovely home in Corvallis since 2003, more than 22 years, and we want to

live here for the rest of our lives. We have also invested a great deal of our wealth in the purchase, property taxes, and the maintenance and improvement of our property, and we expect to be able either to sell it when we get too old to live there or to pass it on to our heirs. If Republic is allowed to expand its poison-producing activities in Benton County and Corvallis, real estate values will plunge as the deteriorating air conditions and increasing health concerns, and just the unbearable worsening of the air quality and stench, will make Corvallis a place that no one will want to live in.

Republic does not care whether Corvallis survives as a community. All it cares about is money and not having to spend money for a new facility in another part of the country to deal with all the waste that it makes its money off of.

I believe that the original terms of the Coffin Butte landfill clearly specified that Republic could never expand facility beyond its original space. Now Republic is trying to ignore the original terms for the Coffin Butte landfill so that it can increase its profits by avoiding having to build a new landfill in another area. I am sure that in addition to the expense of finding a new location for a landfill, I expect that part of Republic's problem is that the company will have difficulty finding a location where there will not be opposition to the placement of a landfill near a residential community. If the company can just force its will upon Benton county and expand it obnoxious poison-producing landfill here, the company figures that its problem is solved.

Instead of trying to expand its Coffin Butte Landfill, Republic should be looking for a location for a new landfill in a place far from human habitation so that they are not poisoning residents who are trying to raise families and live healthy lives.

The logical place for Republic to locate its new landfill is in an uninhabited area in the high desert in the eastern part of the state or in some desert location. The transportation expenses to use such a landfill are simply the costs of doing business in accordance with the original terms of the contract that allowed them to establish the Coffin Butte Landfill in the first place. Management at that time should have taken into consideration the fact that at some point, the landfill would become inadequate to cope with all the waste that is being produced in the Benton county area and that the company would have to create a new landfill at some other location.

The need that Republic feels for an expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill does not actually arise from an increase in the amount of waste produced in Benton county, though that is a factor. The main reason that Republic feels the need to expand the Coffin Butte Landfill is that it has become a dumping ground for waste coming from a large area far away from Benton county. I have heard that Coffin Butte is becoming a regional dumping ground for Republic, and the company wants to increase the ability of the facility to serve an ever-growing flood of waste from ever wider areas on the west coast.

What was Republic thinking when they first established Coffin Butte Landfill in Benton county? Did the company's management think that the company could just lie and mislead the local government and community over the years and force the people of Benton county to live in the midst of a methane-spewing poison factory, and not encounter any resistance from the people who live in Benton county?

Given Republic's many violations of the rules, its many promises that were never fulfilled, the health and environmental damage caused by its Coffin Butte facility, and the company's

refusal to abide by the terms of the contract that allowed it to establish the facility in Benton county years ago, I strongly urge our representatives in the Benton county government to reject Republic's application for expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill.

If there is a legal basis for doing so, I would support the effort to force Republic to scale down its operations at this facility or, even better, close the facility so that the company will stop undermining the quality of life and health of the people of Benton county.

Republic has not been a good neighbor for Benton county, and the company should find a new location for its landfill.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my opinion on the Coffin Butte Landfill.

Sincerely yours,
Hiram James McLendon, Jr. and Hua-yu Li McLendon

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