

LU-24-027 IN-PERSON TESTIMONY

SUBMITTAL COVER SHEET

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IDENTIFIER: T0812

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January 27, 2026

Benton County Board of Commissioners

RE: Objection to the Proposed Expansion of Coffin Butte Landfill

We (my wife and I) were at the Samaritan Hospital in north Corvallis yesterday (1/26/2026) and the smell from the landfill was quite noticeable and offensive. We both felt like Corvallis was going to be known as "stench City", much like Albany used to be known for as one drove down I-5. It is clear that the **landfill already negatively interferes with adjacent uses**. We are hopeful that the Commissioners will find that the expansion of the landfill cannot be granted a Conditional Use Permit.

I have personally experienced this smell before from the landfill and have reported it to DEQ and the Commissioners. There is no question that the smell is from the landfill nor is there any question that it is offensive and degrades the quality of the living environment in Corvallis and the valley area.

What I don't understand is that the County Commissioners cannot take the reports of offensive odors and their deleterious effects on the living environment of Benton County seriously. Numerous reports of odor go to DEQ, to Republic Services and even to the Commissioners. Yet the Commissioners seem to take the word of Republic Services (that there is no odor) as fact and seem to downplay, ignore or reject reports of tens or hundreds of citizens. Apparently, a Republic Services employee steps outside his office at the landfill, sniffs the air and determines there is no odor. And the Commissioners believe Republic Services and rejects the observations of citizens. Shameful.

Solid waste management and particularly landfills are dirty industries. There are no "good" landfills. There are only hazardous, dirty, smelly landfills and more hazardous, more dangerous and more smelly landfills. They all produce offensive odor and dangerous air and water contaminants. To believe otherwise is simply inexcusable by willful disregard or ignorance. The best that can be done is to place landfills (they are still apparently needed) in the best locations possible. Benton County, clearly, is not the best location possible nor is it even a good location, or a mediocre location. It is among the worst locations possible. Even the Benton County staff, the County Council

(attorney) and DEQ have indicated a new landfill could not (or would not) be sited in the Willamette Valley. Yet here we are, with a new landfill being disguised as an expansion of an existing landfill in just about one of the worst locations in Oregon.

Apparently, some on the Commission believe (or have been told) that the Commissioners must approve this landfill expansion (and taken it at face value). Yet the process for a Conditional Use Permit requires no such thing.

The County Commissioners have ample evidence on record to reasonably demonstrate that the landfill interferes with uses on adjacent property. One could define "**adjacent**" as immediately adjacent or, more practically, **a property close enough to be affected by or relevant to the primary property**. In other words, "adjacent" when applied to a massive new landfill (or disguised expansion) must include much more than land within a few hundred feet. In the case of this landfill expansion proposal, "adjacent" should mean all land of north Benton County, including the confines of the City of Corvallis.

Given that odor from this landfill expansion will extend many miles into adjacent properties I would argue that it will seriously interfere with adjacent uses. Republic Services may argue or claim there will be no odor. But it isn't true. There is already odor and, since this is an expansion, the odor will continue. And the odor is demonstrably wide spread, noticed as offensive by many, drawing negative attention to Benton County and the City of Corvallis, adversely impacting property values and likely decreasing the likelihood of private development for either residential or commercial development within the area of northeast Benton County, including the City of Corvallis. Who wants to invest in "stink city"?

But it isn't just the odor. Landfills produce gases, runoff and leachate, all of which contribute to air, land and water degradation and contamination. These adverse impacts clearly interfere with the character of the area, generally northeast Benton County as a minimum, but probably much wider.

But it gets even worse. The federal government is quickly eliminating regulations on all sorts of dirty industries, thus permitting air, water and land contamination. Including landfills. Further, it is clear that regulation and enforcement by EPA will diminish. Even DEQ has shown an inability to monitor and regulate in a timely fashion. Science is, every day, finding new contaminants and adverse impacts from previously approved

products. This is only going to continue. An expanded landfill will only interfere (more) with the character of our community as ever more contaminants are aggregated in a landfill in one of the worst locations possible in the heart of our County and City.

It is clear that the **proposed expansion seriously interferes with adjacent uses**. You have the evidence in the many pages of testimony that you have in your hands. You only need to find the integrity, will and skill to make the findings necessary to support a finding that the proposed CUP seriously interferes with uses on adjacent properties.

You also have evidence in the many pages of testimony to find that an expanded landfill does indeed pose an undue and significant burden on public improvements, facilities, utilizes and services. Simply for starters, you could reference the increase in leachate containing PFAS and other contaminants that are not or can not be effectively treated. They are contaminating not only local waters but also downstream water uses. The waste products of a landfill have all sorts of air, water and land contaminants that have to be dealt with (or should be) which will place a burden on local agencies, their facilities, their staffing and the related costs. Hospitals and clinics will see more people with respiratory problems. Lands may become contaminated and made more expensive for development. Governments will spend more money dealing with local issue related to a hazardous waste operation (landfill). I am no environmental expert, but you have ample evidence in the testimony to find that a new or expanded landfill will, very much, adversely impact local government, local facilities, economic development, wastewater treatment facilities, ground and surface water management and many other services and facilities within the impacted area.

You only require the integrity, the will and the skill to make the necessary findings and deny the CUP. If you need help with the findings, you could secure outside, independent legal assistance to draft the findings given that your current legal council and consultants appear to be seriously compromised.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. & P. Baxter".

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