From:	Tom Hewes
To:	Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals
Subject:	Opposition to LU-24-027, Coffin Butte Landfill Conditional Use Permit Application
Date:	Sunday, October 5, 2025 7:53:01 PM

Dear Commissioners Wyse, Malone and Shepherd

Date: October 5, 2025

Reference: LU-24-027, Coffin Butte Landfill Conditional Use Permit Application

To: Benton County Planning Commission
Benton County Community Development
4500 SW Research Way
Corvallis, OR 97333-1139

Thomas Hewes, mailto:thomashewes11@gmail.com, 115 NW 32nd street Corvallis, OR 97330 File Number [LU-21-047

My name is Thomas Hewes and my wife, Audrey Perkins, and I owned a property at 37368 Blue Heron Rd, Corvallis 97330 until 11/10/2025.

I lived in Soap Creek Valley at 37368 Blue Heron Rd, Corvallis, OR 97330, about five miles from the landfill for 30 years. Hearing that very fact has caused some members of the county staff to actually dismiss my and other neighbors' concerns, using the glib term NIMBY—not in my back yard. This dismissal of Benton County residents' contributions to our shared governance strikes me as a convenient way of not having to consider complex issues and is both irresponsible and not wise governance.

Another comment made was that we are a small yet vocal minority that doesn't represent the thousands of Benton County residents who don't seem to object to this expansion approval, a fact that some feel was obvious since those thousands of residents not living close by are not here objecting. Again, this does not reflect wise thinking. Consider that our location means that we are the ones who are aware of what is going on and thus are spending hours and hours and hours researching and considering the wisdom of this expansion so that we understand its implications. Rather than casting us as exceptions, it is prudent to reframe that as casting us as extremely informed representatives of Benton County.

Therefore, I urge you to listen closely to the issues raised by those in opposition to the CUP.

My contribution to this discussion will be brief and quite personal but, I think, should raise some red flags.

In the 30 years that I lived in Soap Creek Valley, just on my little stretch of road—so, within a three quarter of a mile stretch — 6 of 8 households have had someone contract cancer. That's 75% of this one sample area. Three of those households have had a family member die from cancer (ages 48,58,58), and the other three, including myself, are fighting for our lives. These are all longterm residents of Soap Creek Valley. So far we have found an additional 7 cancer cases for a total of 13 in Soap Creek area. There are more cases that we don't know about as of today.

I am not saying that the landfill is responsible for any of this. But when I was diagnosed with a blood cancer, the first question I was asked was about any environmental toxins that I might have been exposed to. We often smell the fumes from the landfill drifting our way, and there is no way for me to dismiss the possibility that— despite the

regulations being followed—that anyone exposed to these fumes might end up in future statistics like mine. We know that the gene mutations that cause cancer are linked to environmental factors.

I am not laying the blame on the Republic site for our misfortune. But I am saying it would be wrong that to approve this expansion without really doing the rigorous testing needed to make sure that we are safe with even more of these fumes heading our former neighbors way and the increased potential of contamination of our water supply, regardless of what DEQ might conclude.

Therefore, I conclude by saying that this CUP proposal seriously interferes with adjacent properties like ours as well as the character of the area [in violation of BCC 53.215 (1)]. Your Planning Commission carefully reviewed and considered both the application and all testimony and on two different CUP applications unanimously denied this application. I ask that you please uphold your Planning Commission's decision and reject this CUP.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.