

**LU-24-027 IN-PERSON TESTIMONY
SUBMITTAL COVER SHEET**

Received From: John Simpkins

Date: 10/6/25

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Written testimony in support of C.U.P. LU-24-027

John Simpkins

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5812 N.W. Dumbeck Avenue
Albany, Oregon 97321

See attached 4 pages of testimony

05 October 2025

John Simpkins

- 5812 N.W. Dumbeck Avenue, Albany, Oregon 97321
- I have lived at this address for 26 years
- This property is 3.86 line of sight miles from top of Cell 5
- I served on SWAC for 16 years (Jan 2006 through Dec 2021) until I was term limited by the B.O.C.
- I supported the 2021 C.U.P. for Coffin Butte Expansion
- **I am writing to strongly support C.U.P. LU-24-027**

It's inevitable: at some point the Coffin Butte Landfill will have used up the last of its permitted air space. Then, Republic Services will undertake the mandated permanent closure process, and begin 30 years of site monitoring and remediation using monies set aside in the existing Environmental Trust Fund.

The 2021 and 2025 C.U.P. hearings to expand the landfill have elicited considerable opposition from a very vocal minority of Benton County residents. The bulk of this opposition appears to be centered within two groups

1. people who bought property near Coffin Butte (after the State designated the site to be a regional landfill in 1974) and have come to regret that real estate decision and
2. people who have been seduced by the utopian ideal that society in general, and Benton County in particular, can become sustainable and stop producing trash.

Note that every one of these protesters:

- directly sends their personal trash to the landfill via the carts on their sidewalk or the dumpsters outside their apartment/dorm complexes and

- indirectly sends trash to the landfill via the trash generated at businesses (grocery stores, restaurants, food carts, department stores, big box stores, convenience stores etc.) where they shop.

Their opposition is founded on a measure of hypocrisy and/or a lack of self-awareness.

It now behooves the Benton County Board of Commissioners to consider the effects of the inevitable closing of the landfill and prepare for it.

- Benton County currently produces some 75,000 tons of disposable waste yearly. It is highly unlikely that the State will allow another landfill to be sited in the Willamette Valley.
- Thus, our waste will need to be transported by some means to another landfill, likely in Central Oregon.
- It will fall to the counties impacted (Benton, Linn, Marion and Polk) to identify sites for intermodal transfer. Ideal sites will need to have ready access to major roads or rail. If rail, Millersburg would be a good site, provided Linn County residents were willing to acquire site hazards that Benton County residents are actively trying to rid themselves of.
- Additional logistics include:
 - How waste will be transferred from local collection trucks to rail cars?
 - How intermodal transfer site odors, litter, vermin, noise etc. will be managed and who will pay?
 - How will Benton County assume responsibility for the increased carbon footprint, cost, and litter trail along any transport route?

- What incentive does Central Oregon have to accept Willamette Valley waste?
- Accommodations will have to be made for continued public tipping of waste and appliances including locating a site, and managing that site. Likely the general public would wish for this to remain within Benton County.

The Pacific Regional Compost Facility is another resource from which contributing counties benefit. It receives some 110,000 tons of raw materials annually. If it remains at its current location, what will prevent the landfill opponents from transferring their complaints to the PRC operation? Should that occur, Benton County will be forced to choose to end yard waste collection or find some location acceptable to any who might live nearby.

The County stands to lose \$3 to 6 million dollars per year currently generated by landfill hosting fees. The Commissioners will face the choice of reducing services or of increasing taxes. Further, the preferential tipping fees accorded to solid waste generated in Benton County will end, and – along with site purchase and development, increased shipping – significantly increase the cost of solid waste services to the residents of Benton County. None of these options are likely to be well received by the voters.

In 1974 the State created a regional landfill system in an attempt to bring economies of scale and improved operating practices to Valley and Coastal waste disposal. At that time, Coffin Butte was expanded and designated a regional landfill under the 1974 Chemeketa Region Solid Waste Management

Program, a cooperative effort between Benton, Linn, Marion, Yamhill and Polk Counties. Likely, the State would step in if Benton County were to renege on its participation in this cooperative effort. Republic Services could (and likely would) appeal to the State of Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals. Benton County could lose its local control of the landfill if that Board were to decide that the needs of multiple counties outweighed the self-interest of Benton County.

Should that happen, the State could then permit a major expansion to the air space that would keep Coffin Butte viable for decades rather than years.

My points are based on my deep familiarity with the Coffin Butte Landfill – both as a nearby neighbor and as a long-time servant to Benton County. It is my sincere hope that the Benton County Board of Commissioners will look past the self-interest of the vocal few and consider the needs of the many Benton County residents and businesses. Approve this conditional use permit! Approval will buy the County a few additional years to face and solve the consequences listed above.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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