

From: [Gary Barnes](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: Testimony regarding LU-24-027 Board of Commissioners hearing
Date: Monday, October 6, 2025 12:56:05 PM

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To the Benton County Board of Commissioners,

I am writing in opposition to Republic Services' appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to deny the Conditional Use Permit application LU-24-027 to expand the Coffin Butte landfill. I strongly urge the Board of Commissioners to deny this appeal.

I live on South Boundary Road, off of Soap Creek Road, about 3 miles from the landfill. We have lived here for 22 years. My impression when we first moved here was that the landfill, locally owned at the time, was well-managed and responsive to the community. The landfill was busiest on weekends, when locals were bringing their garbage to the landfill.

Now it is completely different. It is owned by a large publicly traded corporation that appears interested in profit and shareholder returns and not about the community. **I was shocked to learn that only 6.7% of waste is coming from Benton County.** That supports my observations. Every day large semi trucks filled with waste are parading in from the North, in part because other landfills have been similarly challenged and either closed or restricted. The size of the mountain of garbage grows right before your eyes. Do we trust Republic Services to responsibly control what comes into the landfill? Who knows what toxins and forever chemicals are coming into our neighborhood. Republic has a mixed reputation at best for being trustworthy, and I now believe their primary interest is in profit, which makes them unreliable as stewards of something so very serious as a landfill. The commitment to our health and safety is a forever commitment, and I believe that Republic has little incentive or interest in that kind of commitment.

The smells from the landfill have become much worse. I can only read about the potential effects on our groundwater, air, and wildlife, because those are not my areas of expertise. However, those concerns make logical sense: rapidly expanding the amount of waste in such a short amount of time does not suggest that Republic is monitoring the volume or the contents of what comes in. The company is gaining a reputation for violating environmental regulations and then covering those up. I understand they are currently under investigation from the EPA for this.

This attempted expansion has called into question the wisdom of building a landfill in such a wet climate, on a steep hillside, with fractured basalt rock will increase concerns about leachate, methane, groundwater contamination, and the negative effects on wildlife. **A properly situated landfill would be in a dry climate, on clay soils, and away from human habitation. Coffin Butte Landfill is none of these.** Expanding the landfill we have would only exacerbate the potential consequences to the environment of the decision to locate the landfill here in the first place.

We have such amazing, diverse wildlife out here in the Soap Creek valley, including a large herd of elk, bald eagles, herons, and of course our beloved turkeys. OSU raises beef cattle here. These are assets to Benton County that can never be replaced. All are

threatened by a landfill expansion. I hope you will read the extensive and detailed report about this from the Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance.

I am also concerned about our property values. We live in a beautiful area, our properties often have some acreage, and we have invested a lot of time and money. We have also paid a lot of property taxes to our county. If Soap Creek has a reputation for being the garbage dump for the State, and if groundwater contamination is found, who would want to live here? I get that we all have to take responsibility for disposal of our own garbage, but why should we have responsibility for everyone else's garbage, at our expense and peril? Is that good for Benton County?

I attended the hearings by the Planning Commission, and I felt the hearings were fair and extremely thorough. I was so impressed by the obvious responsibility felt by the commissioners to fully understand and examine the evidence. The hearings were long and numerous. The fact that they voted to deny the application unanimously shows how convinced they were that this was the correct course of action.

Please vote against this appeal -- and thank you for your service to Benton county. We are counting on you to protect our beautiful county, and our health and safety.

Thank you,

Gary Barnes

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