

From: [Marge](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: Deny Coffin Butte Landfill Expansion...Senator Sara Gelser Blouin Statement
Date: Monday, October 6, 2025 1:38:20 PM

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Dear Commissioners Wyse, Shepherd and Malone,

I am submitting a transcript of Senator Sara Gelser Blouin's remarks when she was asked a question about the Coffin Butte Landfill at the League of Women Voters Legislative Update, held on October 4, 2025 at the Benton County Kalapuya Building.

Please note that this recording began shortly after she began her response. Please note: **She was expressing frustration that she was unable to speak to Commissioners because of the legal constraints involved in the hearing.**

In response to the question, she made a remarkably clear and thorough statement regarding her findings and position that the Coffin Butte Landfill Expansion must be denied for the welfare of our residents.

Below are some key points from her statement followed by the transcript.

Please heed Senator Gelser Blouin's excellent advice.

Best Regards,

Marge Popp

Sara Gelser Blouin Transcript 2025 10 04

I have no idea what decisions they're going to make, because I can't talk to them about it. But I do know that a lot of money has been spent hiring a firm to gather support from communities that aren't ours.

Even last week in the Legislature, people were coming to my office and to others, asking for letters to be written to the Commission or to elected officials to attend public hearings and encourage the Commission to expand the landfill. What frustrated me was one of the talking points — that if the landfill isn't allowed to expand, Representative Sarah Finger McDonald's bill becomes pointless, as if the decision would somehow invalidate the broader discussion.

My response was that expansion is **not the answer**. Even with expansion, it's only a short-term fix. Whether we like it or not, that additional capacity will soon expire. For those of us who live in this community, the contract with Coffin Butte Landfill (operated by Republic Services) already requires them to provide Benton County with waste management services through at least 2040. An expansion would at most add about two years of life — hardly a long-term solution.

Having gone through this process multiple times and reviewed the material carefully, I believe that if we're concerned about decisions that could hamper statewide, long-term work on waste management, it's actually the decision **to expand** that causes the greater harm. You can't undo an expansion. If later analysis shows that expansion is needed, we could revisit it then — but once you expand, you can't reverse that.

Another thing that really struck me: I visited the **BitbyBit Therapy Program** last week and met the horses, the kids, and the staff. Their property has waste blowing onto it from the landfill. They can no longer graze their animals on the pasture. As we walked, we picked up

debris — bits of liner plastic and other material — that had blown over and become tamped down by rain. That's simply not workable for them.

While I understand this decision affects communities all around us, it also has a **very direct impact** on the families and businesses right next to the landfill. It isn't fair to ask those people — who have invested their time, money, and talent to build a home or business — to lose that. Nobody's going to buy property in that condition. And that damage can't be undone.

So yes, this is a big issue. I look forward to seeing it resolved, but I remain concerned. My constituents — especially those who live in Adair Village and North Albany, the areas closest to Coffin Butte — have been **very clear** that they oppose the expansion.

Finally, I'll just say this: I used to live in north Corvallis, near Crescent Valley High School, and I would drive to Salem along Independence Highway — a beautiful drive. But now that I live on the other side of town, I usually take I-5. The other day I drove home the old way and was stunned when I came around the bend — that landfill, this giant, shiny, plastic mountain, now dominates the landscape for miles. It's become the defining visual feature of the area.

This is a big deal for our community, and our local voices deserve to be **first in the conversation**, not an afterthought.

Summary of Key Statements:

“Expansion of Coffin Butte isn't a long-term solution—it's a short-term fix that our community will live with long after the benefits expire.”

Senator Sara Gelser cautioned that expanding the Coffin Butte Landfill would add only about two years of capacity while locking the community into irreversible impacts. She noted that Benton County is already guaranteed waste-service through 2040 and emphasized that expansion would harm nearby families and businesses whose properties are already affected by blowing debris. “You can't undo an expansion,” she said—urging that local voices be first in the conversation.

“You can't undo an expansion.

If later we decide it's needed, we can always revisit it—
but once it's done, the damage can't be undone.”

“That landfill [Coffin Butte Landfill], this giant, shiny, plastic mountain, now dominates the landscape for miles. It's become the defining visual feature of the area.”

In her remarks, Senator Sara Gelser warned that the proposed Coffin Butte expansion offers only short-term relief while imposing long-term environmental and economic costs. She described firsthand visits to nearby properties where landfill debris prevents safe grazing and argued that irreversible expansion would undermine statewide waste-management goals. Gelser reaffirmed that residents of Adair Village and North Albany strongly oppose the project and called for community voices to lead the decision.