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To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: Testimony in opposition to LU-24-027
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Date: October 6, 2025

To: Members of the Benton County Board of Commissioners

Re: Application designation LU-24-027

I am writing to STRONGLY OPPOSE approval of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) submitted by Republic Services & Valley Landfills, Inc.

I have been a resident of Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon for 15 years and have closely followed the LU-24-017 CUP application process and I attended all but one of the hearings before the Benton County Planning Commission where many of my fellow community members expressed their concerns. Republic Services was not always transparent when they responded to these concerns. The Benton County Planning Commission members expressed their concerns by voting unanimously, 7-0, to deny the CUP.

QUALITY OF LIFE & HEALTH: Our community values quality of life issues that protect the environment and promote the health & well-being of all of our citizens, whether they reside in town or in rural areas. These values are stated in the Benton County **2040 Thriving Communities Initiative**. **If the CUP is approved there is a clause in the CUP that will remove the cap of 1.1 million tons of waste that is currently being deposited in the Landfill.**

Expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill (CBL) will create a second landfill mass that will fill up even faster when the cap is removed. This will mean more waste, more methane & other hazardous emissions, more leachate, more trucks & traffic, and more days when the residents in Airlie, Adair Village, Albany & Corvallis have to endure rank odors that compel them to stay indoors. Expansion of the Landfill also violates **BCC 53.215(1)** by interfering with the character of the area that is across the highway from a beautiful natural area, E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area that is home to wildlife and nesting herons.

Republic Services/Valley Landfill, Inc. has the responsible to self-monitor and self-report on emissions at the Coffin Butte Landfill. According to the number of methane emissions found during recent EPA investigations, Republic Services has not performed diligent self-monitoring or self-reporting. This is a matter of high concern and impacts the health & safety of all residents & visitors, as well as the wildlife in the area.

During the hearings before the Benton County Planning Commission, consultants for Republic Services presented data stating that the noise levels during the **operation** of the expanded landfill would not be a problem for neighbors or wildlife. This is debatable. However, one questioner asked specifically about the noise levels during the **preparation** of the new landfill site. The answer was that there would be detonations for 6-8 months each year over a period of 3-4 years. These detonations will have considerable impact on neighbors, wildlife, livestock & pets in the surrounding areas.

The rock below the landfill site is fractured basalt and geologists & hydrologists gave testimony at the Planning Commission hearings about how water moves unpredictability through fractured basalt. The massive amount of rock that has to be hauled out of the ridge to make the crater for the new landfill will require detonations and Republic Services could not answer questions from immediate neighbors about their fears of having their well water disappear overnight. Republic Services will only begin to monitor the area after the landfill becomes operational, not before or during the preparation phase, and that will be too late for any landowner whose well water disappears.

There are additional concerns regarding fires at the Landfill, including one on May 19, 2024 when a crew from Adair Rural Fire & Rescue was dispatched to a fire at the site. The worry is how our county fire resources will have to deal with an increase in fires at Coffin Butte Landfill and potentially could face the disastrous consequences of dealing with an underground fire like the one that occurred at Bridgeton Landfill, Missouri, that has been smoldering for 14 years.

LONG-TERM COST WILL FALL ON BENTON COUNTY CITIZENS: The estimated date for the closure of the Coffin Butte Landfill is 2038 if expansion is not granted. (Info from: https://cd.bentoncountyor.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/history_doc_-_updated_3-27-23.pdf). Our county, and the surrounding Oregon & Washington counties who contribute approximately 93% of the waste, need to start now and use that time to come up with a long-term solution for waste management. Approval of the landfill expansion is **NOT A SOLUTION**.

Republic Services/Valley Landfill, Inc. will be responsible for the Landfill for 30 years following closure. After that, the residents of Benton County will have to maintain & mitigate the site. Expansion will only increase the amount of waste, PFAs, leachate & emissions. This potential “forever cost” for “forever chemicals” will be borne by Benton County citizens. The amount of funds that are reserved for this mitigation is alarmingly small.

OPPOSITION TO THE COFFIN BUTTE LANDFILL EXPANSION:

Corvallis & Benton County residents feel strongly about their community responsibilities. Regarding the Landfill expansion, many organizations and groups have set up committees, hosted panel discussions to inform the public, and have read pages and pages of documentation & investigative reporting regarding the landfill operations. The majority of these reports & commissions have opposed the approval of the CUP:

The Coffin Butte Landfill expansion application for a CUP was denied by the Benton County Planning Commission on July 29, 2025. The commission was unanimous in their decision by a vote of 7-0 .

The Benton County Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) voted 5-1 on April 9, 2025 to recommend to the Benton County Planning Commission that the CUP be denied.

ENRAC-CUPDeliberations-Report-04-15-25-Faux-Final.pdf

The Benton County Democratic Party opposed the expansion.

The Benton County Republican Party opposed the expansion.

The League of Women Voters of Corvallis opposed the expansion.

https://lwvcorvallis.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025-04-Testimony_Coffin-Butte_Benton-County-Planning-Commission.docx.pdf

The Mid-Willamette Bird Alliance opposed the expansion. Testimony submitted 4/14/2025 and in October, 2025

SOURCES:

“Coffin Butte: A Deeper Look at Where the Garbage Goes” Jaclyn Moyer for High Country News & published 6/5/2025 in the Corvallis Advocate

“Numerous safety violations have been detected at the fast-growing landfill. It’s part of a larger pattern of problems with how the U.S. handles waste.” Isobel Whitcomb

<https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/methane/a-huge/a-huge-landfill-in-oregon-is-spewing-methane-its-owners-want-to-expand>

1/17/2025 - KLCC News - EPA inspection uncovered methane leaks at Benton County landfill

<https://www.klcc.org/environment/2025-01-17/epa-inspection-uncovered-methane-leaks-at-benton-county-landfill>

8/12/2024 - KLCC News - Nathan Wilk, “Oregon Senators call for faster investigations of Coffin Butte Landfill”

<https://www.klcc.org/politics-government/2024-08-12/oregon-senators-call-for-faster-investigation-of-coffin-butte-landfill>

May 19, 2024 - Adair Rural Fire & Rescue - Fire outbreak - Facebook post

<https://www.facebook.com/AdairRuralFire/posts/at-704pm-saturday-518-adair-fire-was-dispatched-to-a-smoke-investigation-at-the-/960593315763566/>

March 23, 2025 - Salem Statesman Journal - Tracy Loew

“Hearings set on Coffin Butte landfill expansion as EPA continues investigation”

<https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/2025/03/23/hearings-set-on-coffin-butte-landfill-expansion-as-epa-investigates/82578305007/>

February 25, 2025 - Yahoo! News - Tracy Loew, Salem Statesman Journal

“Oregon legislation would require aerial, drone or satellite landfill monitoring”

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/oregon-legislation-require-aerial-drone-120313493.html>

July 22, 2021 – CNBC, Juhohn Lee “Landfills across the U.S. are raking in millions, here’s how.” Video

<https://www.cnbc.com/video/2021/07/22/how-the-garbage-industry-outperformed-the-market.html>

October 24, 2024 (updated July 30, 2025) - “Corvallis to stop accepting chemical soup from Coffin Butte Landfill.” Ella Hutcherson, Corvallis Gazette Times

https://gazettetimes.com/news/local/government-politics/corvallis-stops-accepting-leachate-next-year/article_2b071485-8972-5653-bd75-5d75ced5e30c.html

April 25, 2025 (updated 9/29/2025) - “Residents deluge Benton County with opinions about Coffin Butte Landfill,” Ella Hutcherson, Corvallis Gazette Times.

https://gazettetimes.com/news/local/government-politics/article_b4f2b724-3e2c-5d95-afca-dde9ed339196.html

October 5, 2025 – “Salem’s sewer system could see double amount of leachate taken from Coffin Butte landfill,” Tracy Loew, Salem Statesman Journal.

<https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/tech/science/environment/2025/10/05/salem-may-double-amount-of-coffin-butte-landfill-leachate-in-sewer-system/86355078007/>

April 16, 2024 – “Coffin Butte Landfill given citations after worker complaints, Salem Statesman Journal.

“Oregon corporate landfills using loophole to avoid methane monitoring, study finds,” Tracy Loew, Salem Statesman Journal.

<https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/tech/science/environment/2025/03/06/oregon-landfills-methane-monitoring-loophole-study/81163394007/>

In closing, I sincerely thank all of the Benton County staff, elected officials and volunteer commission members who have put so much work on the oversight of Conditional Use Permit Application designation LU-24-027. I hope that the members of the Benton County Board of Commissioners will respect the wishes of the residents of Benton County and deny the Conditional Use Permi. that was submitted by Republic Services.

Suzanne V. Ortiz

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