

From: [Elizabeth Conover](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: WEB FORM SUBMISSION - LU-24-027 Coffin Butte Proposed Expansion Written Testimony
Date: Saturday, October 18, 2025 10:52:30 AM

Subject of Testimony: LU-24-027 OPPOSE

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Written Testimony:

October 17, 2025

TO: Commissioners Wise, Malone and Shepherd

RE: LU-24-027

As a resident of Benton County, I strongly oppose the application to expand the landfill and urge you

To uphold your Planning Commission's decision to DENY Republic's application.

Welcome to Corvallis: We have a superfund site.

It's called United Chromium Products.

Because superfund sites include so many forever chemicals, they are our forever friends.

But, we might actually have another Superfund site; that will be for you to decide.

In the late 1970s, toxic waste dumps such as Love Canal received national attention when the public

learned about the risks to human health and the environment posed by contaminated sites. In response,

Congress in 1980 established the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability

Act (CERCLA) CERCLA is informally called Superfund. Superfund was created to address health and

environmental risks posed by contaminated toxic waste sites. Through a federal process sites like Love

Canal-1984, Rocky Flats-1989 and Hanford-1988 ended up on the NPL (the National Priorities List) and

became designated Superfund sites.

Oddly, the Hanford site is also in Benton Co, Benton County Washington on the Columbia River.

United Chrome Products is a superfund site just south of Corvallis and owned by the city. Past activities

contaminated the soil and groundwater with chromium and other hazardous wastes. EPA added the site

to the Superfund list in 1984. Chromium contaminated soils were taken off site for disposal.

Today

40+ years later, the city pumps and treats groundwater to remove contamination and continues to perform

long term groundwater monitoring. Forever chemicals, forever friends.

Where were the chromium contaminated soils taken?

I don't know the answer to that question, but I do know that at the Superfund site next door in Linn County

waste went to Coffin Butte.

That site, Teledyne (now Wah Chang) was added to the Superfund list in 1983. It is one of the country's

largest producers of rare earth metals and alloys. Waste from Teledyne/Wah Chang went to Coffin Butte

moreover, it apparently went into an unlined cell. After it began leaking and contaminating groundwater,

DEQ required it to be moved to a lined cell in 1992.

So if Teledyne/Wah Chang is a Superfund site, and its waste went to Coffin Butte, maybe Coffin Butte too

is a Superfund site.

Consumers Power Inc (CPI) formerly located in Corvallis near Ninth and Circle (now Buffalo Wild Wings,

Jimmy Johns and Walmart) produced soil contaminated waste containing wood preservatives (used to

treat power poles) and PCB's from leaking transformers. It went to Coffin Butte.

Following the Santiam wildfires in 2020, the EPA identified and removed about 300,000 pounds of

hazardous waste from affected properties. It's a long list but included: fuel, petroleum, car batteries,

solvents, pesticides, propane tanks, ammunition and asbestos. It went to Coffin Butte.

Toxic fly ash from Covanta's Marion Waste Incinerator containing dioxin and heavy metals is used as a

daily cover at the landfill.

The following are headlines from the Gazette-Times:

1976 "Wah Chang waste ignites, landfill operator cannot use water for fear of explosion"

1977 "Radioactive material found at Coffin Butte, Radium 222, as deadly as plutonium, concerns about

groundwater contamination"

1979 "Commissioners require home developer to notify buyers of proximity of home to dump"

1979 "Diesel soaked pot plants to be taken to landfill"

1996 "Local Landfill got OK to pump polluted water into Willamette"

All this toxic waste deposited over decades at Coffin Butte produces leachate -in 2021, 31 million

gallons- which is pumped and trucked to local municipal wastewater treatment facilities unequipped to

deal with it, so many toxics including PFAS -forever chemicals- pass through the plant and are discharged into the Willamette River. The subsurface geology at CB is poorly understood, so the extent

of groundwater contamination is unclear, but groundwater connects to surface water and the landfill is

only about ten miles from the Willamette River.

ENRAC -the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee for Benton County, after lengthy

and extensive research published a substantive report on the Coffin Butte Expansion and voted 5-1 to

recommend denial of Republic's application to expand the landfill.

Welcome to our town.

I understand the local theater company is contemplating a production of An Enemy of the People.**

We have one superfund site, we may soon have another. That will be for you to decide.

** This tongue in cheek comment (submitted in my April '25 testimony to the Planning Commission) has become a thing.

You can -in fact- see an OSU production of Ibsen's: An Enemy of the People November 13-23rd at

PRAX.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Conover

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