

From: [Maya Abels](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
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Below is a version of the testimony I intend to present at the Hearing:

My name is Maya Abels. I live in Grand Oaks, in the southwest part of Corvallis. I speak as a resident of Corvallis for 40 years. I love living in Corvallis.

As much as I love living here, I am gravely concerned about the future of Corvallis ... because of this proposed Landfill Expansion.

When I moved here in 1985, Coffin Butte was a small county-owned dump. Today, it is the 2nd largest landfill in Oregon, now privately owned and operated by the 2nd largest waste management company in the nation, Republic Services. Waste management is big business. Republic Services is worth \$26 billion; Bill Gates is Republic's largest stockholder. The company's revenue is generated mainly from its solid waste collection operations, that is, its garbage collection. When you collect that much garbage, you need a place to dump it. Republic has found the perfect place to dump its garbage: rural Benton County, Oregon.

Republic Services hauls in more than one million tons of garbage each year from 2 states and 22 counties and dumps it all on Coffin Butte. Expanding the landfill is a priority for these other counties because now ...they don't have to worry about their own waste management problems. Their garbage is out of sight, out of mind, and dumped in Benton County. And what does Benton County get in return for such generosity? Good question.

I often hike near Coffin Butte in MacDonald Forest and EE Wilson. I am shocked by the putrid smell of the air and the trash along the sides of the road. I used to bicycle along Highway 99 and Independence Highway, but now garbage-trucks enter the dump every 78 seconds and they make bicycling dangerous. These dangerous, disgusting experiences will increase if the dump expands.

The Landfill odor and traffic are just the obvious effects of this gigantic mountain of garbage. I am seriously concerned about the amount of methane known to be leaking into the air above the landfill. Satellite images show some of the largest methane plumes in the Pacific Northwest emanating from North Benton County.

In both 2022 and 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency found multiple methane leaks at Coffin Butte, some at explosive concentrations. This dangerous, climate-heating pollution will worsen if the dump expands.

I am seriously concerned about surface and groundwater contamination from the landfill, especially about the 40 million gallons of toxic leachate trucked every year to waste-treatment

plants that have no capacity or technology to properly clean that leachate. So 40 million gallons of water contaminated with solvents, PFAS, and other toxins pour into the Willamette River, a few miles upstream from the Adair Village water supply. The poisonous problem of leachate will expand if the dump expands.

The staff of the Benton County Planning Department don't seem particularly concerned about any of this. They have listed more than 80 conditions related to Republic's Conditional Use Permit request. That alone should raise 80 red flags against this dangerous expansion. The County admits they have no capacity to monitor these conditions, and no jurisdiction to oversee remediation to prevent violations.

So why draft 80 conditions that cannot and will not ever be enforced? Another good question.

Republic Services has not performed like a good neighbor up to now and I have no confidence they will be any different with this expansion. And the County Planning Department seems unwilling to hear testimony against anything other than local stink and noise.

The restrictions set by the county's legal counsel are designed to force you, our County Commissioners, to see, hear, and consider only the narrowest possible line of inquiry and to ignore overwhelming evidence presented during the Planning Commission hearings. These restrictions serve Republic Services only, and no one else. It doesn't have to be this way.

Benton County trash accounts for only seven percent of the garbage hauled into Coffin Butte. Republic Services is contractually obligated to continue to take Benton County trash until the year 2040. That gives us 15 years to implement a truly, environmentally "clean and strong" solid waste management process for Benton County and the mid-Willamette Valley, a process begun in 2022 by the workgroup "Benton County Talks Trash." Benton County prides itself on its livability. The County's website touts its "long history of commitment to the principles of sustainability to secure healthy, prosperous communities now and for our future."

The long-range vision of "Benton County Talks Trash" seems consistent with that sustainability claim. As is the County's Climate Action Plan, its 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative, its Habitat Conservation program for upland and wetland prairie habitat, and even its brand new Regional Sustainable Materials Management Plan. What is NOT consistent with Benton County's commitment to "healthy, prosperous communities now and for our future" is this unwise, unwanted landfill expansion.

We don't need this expansion. We don't want this expansion. We have alternatives to this ever-growing mountain of garbage. Please uphold Benton County's commitment to livability and the Planning Commission's unanimous decision to ...deny this landfill expansion. Thank you, Commissioners.

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