

LU-24-027 IN-PERSON TESTIMONY SUBMITTAL COVER SHEET

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Written Testimony of Miriam Estrada related to LU-24-027

Submitted to the Benton County Board of Commissioners

Date: October 22, 2025

Commissioners:

My name is Miriam Estrada, and I am submitting this testimony as an individual and resident of Benton County. In my professional capacity, I serve as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Corvallis Chamber of Commerce and work in real estate and community development here in Corvallis. My comments today reflect my personal perspective as a community member who cares deeply about Benton County's long-term future — our families, our workforce, and the affordability of living and working here.

I've followed the discussion about the Coffin Butte Landfill expansion closely and believe it represents a necessary and responsible investment in Benton County's infrastructure, economy, and future planning. There are several reasons I support this project.

1. Economic Stability and Fiscal Responsibility

The landfill provides significant annual revenue to Benton County — millions of dollars that directly support local services and programs. While I understand the County incurs certain expenses to manage its role, it's still a substantial source of income. If the landfill's operations were restricted or its future uncertain, those funds would need to be replaced elsewhere — likely through higher taxes or service reductions.

As a real estate professional, I see firsthand how affordability already challenges our residents. Homebuyers in Benton County face higher property taxes and overall costs compared to neighboring Linn and Marion Counties. Lenders even prequalify buyers for different loan amounts depending on the county because of these cost differences.

To put this into perspective:

- 2025 YTD, there have been 597 residential sales in Benton County compared to 1,105 in Linn County.
- Benton County's population is roughly 75% the size of Linn County, but our home sales are only 54% of theirs.
- Of 601 single-family deeds in Albany, 15.3% were non-owner occupied (rentals). In Corvallis, that figure is 30.5% of 445 deeds.

This shows how affordability continues to erode homeownership opportunities for working families in our community. We cannot continue to price people out of the market while cutting off stable sources of county revenue.

2. Reliable Infrastructure and Practical Governance

Oregon already enforces some of the strictest landfill regulations in the nation. It's not practical — or sustainable — for Corvallis and Benton County to impose even more restrictive or burdensome policies that go beyond state requirements. Doing so isolates us from regional collaboration and effectively becomes a form of self-sabotage, undermining our ability to plan for growth and affordability.

The Coffin Butte facility provides essential waste management services that benefit the entire region. Expanding it responsibly allows Benton County to retain local control, manage costs, and plan ahead — rather than face unplanned crises when capacity runs out.

3. Jobs, Workforce Diversity, and Economic Inclusion

Republic Services provides a mix of blue-collar and white-collar jobs that contribute directly to the diversity and strength of our local economy. These include commercial mechanics, drivers, administrative staff, and management-level roles.

While our area is fortunate to have large employers like HP and Oregon State University, it's critical that we also maintain career opportunities for the full spectrum of our workforce. The partners and families of those drawn here by larger institutions also need local employment options — and industries like waste management, recycling, and logistics help fill that need.

Supporting Coffin Butte is not just about waste management; it's about sustaining a balanced economy that values all forms of work.

4. Long-Term Community Vitality

When Benton County supports industries that provide stability, we strengthen the foundation of our community. The working families who make up our present and future — the people who coach our kids, run small businesses, and serve in civic organizations — depend on the kind of affordability and opportunity that responsible infrastructure makes possible.

If we push out industries that provide steady jobs and critical services, we risk becoming a transient community — one that is increasingly owned by those who can afford to live here but not built by those who actually do.

In closing, I respectfully urge the Commission to approve the Coffin Butte Landfill expansion. This project reflects balanced, fact-based decision-making that considers both the economic and environmental needs of Benton County.

Thank you for your thoughtful attention and for the time you've devoted to listening to the community on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam Estrada

Corvallis, Oregon