

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

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Verbal Testimony – Benton County Commissioners appeal hearing for Republic Services,
10/22/2025 by Dr. Shelley Su

I read with interest the 49-page appeal of the Benton County Planning Commission's decision to deny Republic Services their proposed expansion of the existing Coffin Butte Landfill. I had concerns. As a toxicologist I have reviewed many pollution cases in my career, and I find that that Republic Services has made very little effort to address major concerns about leachate and groundwater contamination, increased airborne methane and PFAS levels, and increased noise just to name a few. Instead they cherry-picked data, argued about the definition of terms, and largely gave "assurances" that the problems of the past are all being taken care of. As a matter of fact, Republic Services put forth the assertion that none of their past activities or lack of performance could be used in evaluating their expansion proposal. That seems ludicrous. In addition, there was little to no indication of HOW these problems they were willing to admit would be addressed.

For example, they claimed that arsenic levels are not a problem and are within acceptable limits – that is not true.

They claimed that noise levels will not be a problem and will be lowered regardless of the fact that the expansion will entail 3-4 years of 6-8 months/year of major earth moving. They simply said it would "Be better".

Republic Services downplayed the concern over fires and potential explosions.. They misrepresented the volume of calls to the Adair Fire Department, claiming only 2 fires had occurred. The fact is that there were 28 documented fire calls from the Adair Fire department since 2023 alone. Ms. Virigina Scott gave a very good overview of the fire reporting issue.

Watching the vigorous public relations campaign Republic Services has engaged in to get people to give glowing reviews and big "thumbs up" to the landfill expansion has been disconcerting. We have had the mayors of municipalities sing their praises. But it seems they are more vested in knowing that Benton County is bearing the burden of Republic Services mismanagement of Coffin Butte. Either they are not aware of the dangerous levels of methane and airborne PFAS that will be floating over his city in the future, or they just don't care. I believe many Benton County residents feel that the money Republic Services spent on a Public Relations campaign could instead have been better spent on improving their egregious worker safety practices and poor overall performance of their job duties.

Several facts, however, are indisputable. 1) We DO NOT WANT to be the de novo toxic waste dump for the surrounding regions. We DO NOT WANT increased garbage coming into our community when the citizens of Benton Count feel the PRESENT level of service is unacceptable, and 2) It is clear that we need not a Band-Aid on our waste disposal problem, but

a viable, common-sense long-term solution. Expanding the Coffin Butte Landfill is NOT that solution. We have 15 years to find that solution. I urge the Commissioners to uphold the Planning Commission's decision and to focus on the future and finding that solution.