

October 29, 2025

To: Benton County Commissioners

Thank you for accepting my
response to the LU-24-027
public hearing.

Sean Edwards

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

Received From: Sarah Edwardsson

Date: 10/28/2025

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BOC ID: Boc 3

IDENTIFIER: T0697

To: Benton County Commissioners

From: Sarah Edwardsson, 28840 Daystar Drive, Corvallis

Date: October 28, 2025

Re: Response to documents and evidence submitted by Republic Services in defense of LU-24-027 at the public hearing on October 22, and referencing County code 53.215 (1):

The decision to approve a conditional use permit shall be based on findings that:

- (1) The proposed use does not seriously interfere with uses on adjacent property, with the character of the area, or with the purpose of the zone

Commissioners:

In 2014, my husband Ken and I became stewards of the former Brenneman farm at 28903 Tampico Road. When we bought this property, of course we knew that the landfill was nearby and we share a property line. We did not have concerns about the landfill since the boundaries were established and it appeared to be well-managed. And we understand that landfills provide an essential service. We have since come to observe how Coffin Butte is not optimally located, due to wetlands, fractured bedrock, adjacent wild areas, and the abundant seasonal rainfall of this area. But there it is, and it needs to be managed for the term of its remaining 12 years of life and monitored post-closing.

What I would like to focus on is how the requested expansion is harmful to us, to our animal and human community, and to the exquisite and rare native oak habitat that surrounds the expansion zone.

I will explain how ***the expansion will interfere with uses on adjacent property, and impact the character of the area***. By any definition, we are adjacent to the proposed expansion area of the landfill. We share a common border. So my testimony is relevant.

This land we call the Brenneman Farm has been grazed and cropped on its 150 acres since the mid-1800s. In pre-settlement times, we know from burn scars in tree rings that it was managed as an oak savannah by the Kalapuya.

From the top of Tampico Ridge, where our 300 year old legacy oak stands, you can see into Soap Creek and see the land that was homesteaded by Leticia Carson, the first Black settler in Oregon, and her common-law husband, David Carson. This location is so beautiful that the current tenant caretakers of the farm, Ryan Wilson and Angela Krueger, chose it as the site of their wedding in August of 2024. Previous tenants John and Melissa Dolde were also married at the farm in the fall of 2015. We would love to be able to host other events on the land – but with the new landfill cell encroaching and bringing with it increased noise, light, and smell – it will definitely ***impact the character of the area.***

Much of the current beauty of Tampico Ridge is due to the massive undertaking of thinning Douglas fir out of 90 acres of native oak. We have worked at this since 2016 at the urging and with the assistance of several state and local agencies. We have successfully pressed the “pause” button what would have been the loss of this historic and rare ecological system – the Willamette Valley oak prairie and woodland. By returning this forest to its former composition, we have reduced the risk of fire, increased bird and invertebrate species, created better habitat for deer and elk, and boosted its climate resiliency. We have also seen the return of Kincaid’s lupine, the sole source of food for the endangered Fender’s blue butterfly. It is hard to imagine this uptick in wildlife and biodiversity continuing as the landfill expands. It will definitely ***impact the character of the area.***

An important component of maintaining this ecosystem is replacing invasive blackberry with grasses and forbs. Our options for doing this were: burning, spraying, mowing, and grazing.

We have chosen to mainly maintain the restored land by grazing. We consider burning to impose an undue burden of smoke and risk of fire to our neighbors.

It's complicated to spray herbicide around desired wildflowers and shrubs. And mowing is impractical on many of the steep hillsides.

You have heard testimony from Angela Krueger. It is her herd of purebred, prize-winning Hereford cattle that are the backbone of this farm. Angela and her husband Ryan are young farmers who want to make this their home and a significant part of their livelihood. If you ever meet Angela and talk with her about her cows, you will understand her love and dedication to her animals.

We have managed to keep cattle on the land while not impeding the movement of Roosevelt elk. We have used smooth wire and poly wire materials, lowered the height of fences, and put up with occasional down fences. We feel that while we are caretakers here, we should provide a home for all animal that occupy this place. In other words, **not** interfering with the original character of the area.

The cattle also have a strong herd and protective instinct that has allowed them to coexist with the mountain lions that roam Tampico Ridge. To date, we have not lost a single animal due these apex predators. A bigger risk, it seems, is the ingestion of plastic that continually blows across Coffin Butte Road and through the buffering land around the landfill to our farm. Every walk around the pasture results in pockets and bags stuffed with bits of garbage.

If the landfill is allowed to expand, that pollution moves much closer. I can't even imagine losing an animal to suffocation or an intestinal blockage due to the ingestion of plastic, and we know it can happen. This is an example of how ***the expansion will interfere with uses on adjacent property.***

Additionally, we rent a 50-acre field to a young farmer who grows perennial fescue for seed. It must be disheartening to care for an important cash crop by adding another task to the list including soil preparation, planting, fertilizing, weed control, harvesting, and baling straw – that of trash removal. Anyone who has had to stop and pull plastic out of a machine will understand

how tedious and time-consuming this is. It's another example of how ***the expansion will interfere with uses on adjacent property.***

If blasting in the bedrock of Tampico Ridge causes changes to the underground hydrology, we could lose the sustainable cattle watering system that we have developed from a natural spring at the base of the hill. Drilling wells are notoriously expensive and unreliable in this area. It is not an economical option. If we lose our spring water, ***the expansion will interfere with uses on adjacent property.***

Commissioners, think about your legacy – how you can consciously allow the expansion of this unfortunately located landfill ...is unconscionable.

I urge you to do the right thing – deny this expansion – and help Benton County and the people who elected you to find a better, longer-lasting, more sustainable solution for our future.