

From: [Debbie P](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: Oppose LU-24-027
Date: Tuesday, October 7, 2025 4:10:30 PM

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Dear Chair Wyse and Commissioners Shepherd and Malone,

I wish to counter all five points made in the “canned” proponent testimonies you are receiving from people who were taken in by the “Benton Clean & Strong” fake grassroots campaign underwritten by Republic Services.

Point 1) “This is a practical, responsible plan that keeps solid waste management under local control, where it belongs.”

The Coffin Butte Landfill is NOT locally controlled. Local control would mean by you - by Benton County. Benton County gave up all but one aspect of local control when Commissioners Jaramillo, Augerot and yes, Pat Malone, signed the 2020 Landfill Franchise Agreement with Republic Services, negotiated by County Counsel Vance Croney. And that one remaining piece of “local control” is the intake cap on the amount of garbage which can be brought in per year (1.1 million tons). BUT A CLAUSE IN THAT SAME AGREEMENT ELIMINATES THAT INTAKE CAP IF THIS EXPANSION IS APPROVED.

So, sorry, but if this expansion gets approved, it will eliminate the last vestige of local control. So that argument is false.

2) Approving the expansion will “protect families and budgets. Without expansion, waste may need to be hauled long distances — driving up costs for households, schools, and county services.”

Note the use of the wiggle-word “may”... as in “waste may need to be hauled long distances...” I see they’ve begun leaving out the words “by truck”, which they used to claim in this particular argument, but no longer do. This is because Republic Services KNOWS that it doesn’t have to be hauled long distances by truck - that waste can be very economically transported by rail, so the “distance” becomes irrelevant. Especially when weighed against the environmental consequences of increasing the size of this dump in a climate completely ill-suited to having one. Rail is far more economical and could actually reduce costs for ‘households, schools and county services.’

Also, there is a false implication here that if the expansion is denied... that the landfill will close. The landfill will continue to operate at least through the year 2040, the end of the Landfill Franchise Agreement term.

So approving expansion does nothing to “protect families and budgets” and in fact will cause more harm.

3) Approving the expansion will “preserve local revenue. Coffin Butte generates nearly \$6

million every year to Benton County — our second-largest discretionary revenue source after property taxes — supporting schools, public safety, and road maintenance.”

Republic Services (er, “Benton Clean & Strong”) keeps stating the incorrect figure here. The landfill provides a “franchise fee” to the county of about \$2.6 million per year (see your county budget). Benton County’s total adopted budget for 2025-2027 is \$540.2 million, so landfill payments represent less than 1% of total revenues.

“Second-largest discretionary revenue source after property taxes...” um, property taxes are not discretionary(?)

Also, schools and public safety etc are largely covered by property taxes, NOT discretionary funds.

So this argument does not hold water either.

4) Approving the expansion will “advance renewable energy and climate goals. By capturing landfill gas, Coffin Butte powers more than 4,000 homes annually with clean energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

The landfill’s so-called “groundbreaking” gas-to-energy operation is 30 years old now, and their claim to “generate enough power for approximately 4,000 homes” has not changed since 2008 — even though the waste intake per year has doubled since then. Meanwhile, per Republic Services’ own reporting, at least 30% of landfill gas is NOT captured by this system, and based on Carbon Mapper data, it is more likely in the 55% to 60% range. So ALL THAT LANDFILL GAS NOT BEING CAPTURED BY THE GAS COLLECTION SYSTEM IS LEAKING INTO THE ATMOSPHERE. **This is not a benefit to anyone, local or otherwise** - and will DEFINITELY not *reduce* greenhouse gas emissions.

5) Approving the expansion will “ensure reliable, affordable service. Residents and businesses depend on consistent, affordable garbage service. Expansion secures that for the future.

It will do nothing of the kind. This statement contains an implicit threat... that “rates will go up if Republic doesn’t get its expansion!” Garbage rates cannot be increased without express permission from YOU, our county government. So denying expansion would not automatically mean an increase in rates. In fact, they could even go down if Benton County opened up collection services to competitive bidding. (Right now, Republic Services has a garbage monopoly in Benton County: they own/operate/control the landfill, and the County Commissioners and the City of Corvallis have granted Republic an exclusive contract for garbage collection, recycling AND greenwaste/composting).

In summary, once again: please, please, please — for the sake of families now and families in the future — DENY LU-24-027.

Sincerely,
Debbie Palmer
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