

From: [befrey](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: Opposition to LU-24-027
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Testimony opposed to LU-24-027

I am vigorously opposed to expansion of the Coffin Butte landfill in Benton County. I have lived in Benton County most of the time since 1970, and at every career turn chose to live here largely because Benton county is a gem. The quality of life here is outstanding, with accessible forest lands, rich agricultural areas, the scenic Willamette River and tributaries, easy access to the Cascades and coast, and a vibrant college town with all that it offers. In medical practice, I found the outstanding environment here to be an important draw in recruiting and retaining high quality medical staff. It is this attractive environment that enables Benton County to thrive and prosper.

When I first moved here in 1970, I was immediately struck by what an ideal area this was to live and raise a family in. At that time, the Coffin Butte landfill was a minor landmark along the road. Now it is alarming to see and smell this vast and growing mountain of waste greeting you as you pass by.

As an oncologist, it is hard not to see this as a rapidly growing toxic presence in our otherwise beautiful county. This has become an enormous reservoir for waste pouring in from many parts of the state. The high annual rainfall that keeps our lands lush and green also leaches out a witch's brew of toxic chemicals and toxic metals from the landfill, and, despite some filtering, much of this mix of toxic metals and chemicals in the leachate inevitably finds its way into our groundwater and rivers.

These hazards will last far into the future, even decades after this landfill has been capped, and long term maintenance and monitoring will be required. Costs of long term liability and remediation may fall on local governments.

Republic Waste has been cited many times for violating the Federal Clean Water Act and for serious methane gas leaks at its landfill sites. The noxious odor coming from the Coffin Butte site and other Republic Waste sites around the country has resulted in thousands of complaints from nearby residents.

The outstanding environment and quality of life we enjoy in Benton County is the key to our future. To compromise this foundation for some increased revenue the county might gain from allowing landfill expansion here would be short-sighted folly, like the fable of the skylark who would trade one of its feathers for a worm to eat each day, until it had no feathers to trade and now lost its ability to fly.