

From: [bruce thomson MS,MD](#)
To: [Coffin Butte Landfill Appeals](#)
Subject: LU-24-027 COFFIN BUTTE EXPANSION
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To: Benton County Board of Commissioners

From: Bruce Thomson MD,MS

October 20,2025

Commissioners Wyse, Malone and Shepherd

Letter in Opposition - LU-24-027 – Coffin Butte Expansion

October 20, 2025

I am Bruce Thomson a researcher at OSU in the field of environmental studies (1972-1986); a retired Corvallis physician (1993-2014). I have also served as Benton County Health Officer (1996-2022) retiring from that position in January of 2022 as the Covid-Pandemic was winding down. I have lived in Corvallis for over 55 years; save the 7 years I and my family lived in Portland while attending medical school and Residency training at Oregon Health Sciences University. For the past 32 years my family has lived 2 miles south of the Coffin Butte Landfill. My family and my neighbors have personally been increasingly impacted by malodorous noxious gas release from the Coffin Butte landfill, particularly in the past 5 years. Symptoms include irritation of the eyes, sinuses and lungs in our outdoor environment.

For the past 8 years I have served on the Board of Directors of Bit-by-Bit Therapy. This non-profit organization has served a unique role in Benton County since its inception. Bit-by-Bit Therapy provides unique therapeutic interactions utilizing horses as therapy to benefit people with both physical and psychological disabilities. There is no other similar organization in all of Benton County. In the past 5 years Bit-by Bit Therapy horses and humans, have been severely impacted by an increasing incidence of release of noxious gases and

trash blowing onto their property, and frequent blasting events. This has led to a severe limitation in the use of their property for the therapeutic benefit of their disabled clients. An expansion of the landfill moving closer to Bit by Bit property will make each of these problems worse. The Board of Directors of Bit-by-Bit therapy has already submitted written testimony to the Planning Commission hearings and also to this hearing with the Benton County Board of Commissioners regarding the problems of the proposed expansion of the Coffin Butte landfill to their continued operation.

It is known that a geologic fault has been identified and runs very close by the Coffin Butte Landfill. It seems incumbent upon the Benton County Board of Commissioners to engage an independent, thorough risk analysis by a qualified, certified, and unbiased source; that would assesses the risk of failure of the Coffin Butte landfill structurally, prior to considering an expansion of the landfill.

I recognize and applaud the existing and previous commissioners for being such “good neighbors” to our surrounding counties by providing a landfill for those counties. Unfortunately for the property owners and residents in north Corvallis, the initial 3 counties that were envisioned long ago have now grown to 23 counties that Benton County is supporting with the landfill.

In 2025 alone, there have been over 800 testimonies given by the people of Benton County and Corvallis asking for NO FURTHER EXPANSION of the Coffin Butte Landfill. It is obvious to those Benton County citizens who have requested no further expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill, that approval of this proposed expansion would increasingly jeopardize the health and well-being of Benton County residents, and their farm animals. Families such as Bit-by-Bit Therapy will no longer be able to use their farmlands for intended purposes because of the threat of and actual deteriorating health of their livestock. The animals, and their humans, are sensitive to the loud noises, the aerial garbage and the toxic gas releases that emanate from the landfill to an ever increasing degree. Making the landfill larger with the proposed expansion moves these activities ever closer to affected properties and will seriously interfere with the purpose of Bit-by-Bit Therapy property in violation of BCC 53.215(1).

It is time for the Commissioners to be “good neighbors” to the people of Benton County and north Corvallis whose eyes, sinuses, lungs and are being physically irritated, and otherwise negatively impacted by the toxic malodorous gases. I strongly oppose the expansion of the landfill, and request that you uphold the unanimous decision of the Planning Commission to deny the expansion application being made. Before the Benton County Commissioners decide which way you lean towards expansion please share with the public, an analysis of the risk of the landfill failing in the event of an earthquake, even a minor earthquake.

Rather than approving an expansion, it is time to plan for the eventual closure of the Coffin Butte Landfill, and to end the ever-increasing problems emanating from the landfill. An expansion of the landfill will only add to the ever increasing significant public health threat to the overall health of Benton County constituents, and adjacent counties if the Coffin Butte Landfill would structurally fail by an even minor earthquake event.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public Comment on this issue. I hope that my comments are helpful to the Commissioners.

Bruce Thomson, MD, MS

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