

From: [Bryn Hazell](#)
To: [Benton Public Comment](#)
Subject: Written Testimony - LU-24-027 (Landfill Expansion Application)
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Submit your written testimony here :

I am submitting Marge Popp's letter to the editor of the Gazette-Times because it's better than anything I could have written and I support her perspective.

From today's (3/25/25) Gazette-Times
This 'limited' expansion is another ruse
AS I SEE IT

MARGE POPP

Proponents of Coffin Butte Landfill expansion claim Republic Services' conditional use permit application requests only a "limited" expansion. This characterization is misleading and obscures the true impact of the project.

Republic Services aims to exploit a loophole in the 2020 franchise agreement to lift the 1.1 million-ton annual cap on trash intake, paving the way for importing unlimited amounts of waste. This move would increase the profitability of its operations at the expense of our community and environment.

The expansion involves significant expenditure, with tens of millions of dollars allocated to moving leachate ponds and millions of pounds of dirt on the south side of Coffin Butte Road. This investment is purportedly for only six additional years of landfill lifespan?

The current landfill footprint already has an estimated 14 to 16 years of capacity remaining at current trash intake levels, making the economic rationale behind this expansion questionable.

Far from being "limited," this project is a large-scale endeavor designed to maximize landfill capacity, potentially leading to the eventual closure of Coffin Butte Road and transforming the valley into a vast waste disposal site for other counties.

An email exchange between Benton County Attorney Vance Croney and Republic Services employee Julie Jackson, dated Oct. 14, 2020 (obtained via a Public Records Request), reveals Republic Services' long-term ambitions for the site.

Vance Croney writes, "Hmm. Republic has a chunk of land south of Coffin Butte that is already zoned Landfill which only requires conditional use approval to begin use as a landfill

cell. It also has many acres of EFUzoned land that certainly can be used for additional cells, but would require rezoning. Are we both talking about the Landfill zoned acreage as creating an additional 15-20 years of life?"

Julie Jackson replies: "Vance, This is just the estimate for the cell area we are asking to rezone. We have many acres that could hold waste and that will likely be a future discussion with the County."

Republic Services has a history of inaccurate reporting and noncompliance with the conditions of use for the Coffin Butte Landfill, and Benton County has not taken appropriate action. The lack of consequences for noncompliance suggests a failure of our local government to protect our community and natural resources.

A 2023 EPA investigation revealed significant methane leakage exceedances, further underscoring Republic Services' lack of transparency and accountability. Recent communications between the EPA and Republic Services indicate further issues with the accuracy of information provided by the company.

The EPA's subpoena requiring written verification concludes with this sternly worded caution for the signatory:

"I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information in response including the possibility of fine and imprisonment."

Interestingly, the landfill manager responsible for signing this document resigned about this time.

It is imperative that we demand honesty and transparency from both our county government and Republic Services. This requires a capable and proactive staff that can think critically and independently as well as engaged participation from the community.

Our county government and commissioners have become overly reliant on Republic Services to act responsibly, prioritizing the status quo over diligent oversight.

Similarly, complacent residents have placed too much trust in elected officials and county staff to act in their best interests.

With Benton County staff being well-compensated, we should expect and demand experienced and dedicated individuals who are committed to serving the community's interests.

It is time for us to recognize the true consequences of this expansion to our community and environment, and we must demand responsible governance and environmental stewardship.

We need to wake up and smell the dump!

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