

**From:** [Sandy Riverman](#)  
**To:** [Benton Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Coffin Butte Landfill Expansion  
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Dear Members of the Benton County Planning Commission:

As a longtime Corvallis resident and Willamette River kayaker who cares deeply about the health of our air, water, land, and nearby communities, I **strongly oppose the expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill** and ask that the commissioners reject this application.

Rather than considering an expansion of this controversial landfill, Benton County should stand up to Republic Services' request, knowing that approval will be the beginning of even more counties sending their waste to our already inadequate facility. We should be realistically considering the inevitable closure of the current landfill when it has reached capacity by developing a plan that details a more modern and safer waste-recovery facility, an effective waste-reduction system, and realistic accounting of the cost of clean-up -- which will be a cost that Benton County residents will someday have to pay.

For the proposed expansion, there are many troubling problems, including:

- **Already gross under-reporting of methane pollution by Valley Landfills, Inc.** In 2023, satellite images showed large plumes of methane, a significant greenhouse gas, emanating from Coffin Butte. In 2022 and 2024, the EPA found explosive levels of methane seeping from the landfill, when Valley Landfill reported only negligible leakage. An expansion will surely exacerbate this problem, seriously jeopardizing the health and well-being of nearby residents, recreationists, and surrounding public lands where widespread drift of noxious chemicals is regularly detected. (Criteria 1)
- **Mercury, lead, industrial solvents, "forever chemicals" (PFAs) and other hazardous chemicals leach out of the landfill and end up in the Willamette River.** In 2021, 31 million gallons of leachate were pumped out of the landfill and sent to wastewater treatment plants in Corvallis and Salem, passing through systems that were not equipped to capture PFAs before dumping them into the Willamette River. With no plan to reduce leachates, this expansion would increase toxic pollution into the river. This would put increased burden on public utilities to remove these harmful chemicals and keep them from further fouling municipal sources of drinking water. (Criteria 2)
- **Coffin Butte already receives one third of Oregon's garbage,** much of it in large loads of unsorted solid waste. Little effort is made to encourage or enforce recycling and waste reduction, despite DEQ's mandate to shift from Solid Waste Management to Materials Management. A larger landfill would serve faraway communities that may choose to ignore the importance of this mandate, leaving an increasing burden of liability on Benton County. Even the current status-quo approach to waste management violates the shift toward Sustainable Materials Management criteria endorsed by Benton County and the state of Oregon. Expanding the landfill would make this violation even worse. (Criteria 3)

- **The environmental impact of Coffin Butte extends well beyond the landfill itself.** In addition to releasing methane into the air and leachate into the river, the odor of rotting garbage can often be detected throughout the northern part of Benton county. These odors contain vinyl chloride, ethyl benzene, toluene, benzene -- all toxic chemicals that can endanger public health. Expanding the landfill will most certainly expand the release of these toxins. In addition, the abundant litter that is spilled from more than 256,000 trucks per year on their way to the landfill is an eyesore. This unpleasant sight, as well as the smell and health threats damages the character of the area (Criteria 1)
- **Benton County is burdened by the unlimited long-term risk and environmental liability for the landfill** for future inevitable cleanup as well as future public improvements, facilities, utilities and other services to the area and to the residents of Benton County. (Criteria 2)
- **Expanding the landfill removes any volume restriction imposed by Benton County,** freeing Republic Services to immediately increase intake of waste from the region and beyond.

This Coffin Butte expansion will have long-lasting negative effects on water and air quality as well as to the climate and livability far beyond the local area. We all live downstream, as the saying goes. Your decision on this important issue will affect generations to come. Please understand the gravity in your deliberations and think about more than the immediate revenue that Republic Services brings in. The health of our community seriously depends on you.

Thank you,  
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