

From: [Bruce Cowger](#)
To: [Benton Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Bruce Cowger](#)
Subject: Testimony regarding LU-24-027, the application to expand the landfill
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Testimony for the Benton County Planning Commission

Purpose: This testimony regards LU-24-027, the application to expand the landfill

From: Bruce and Donna Cowger, 37194 Helm Drive, Corvallis, OR 97330

We oppose this application and strongly urge its denial. Republic Services has failed to prove that its proposed expansion won't further impact northern Benton County. We are gravely concerned about what is known and what isn't known about the Coffin Butte landfill and Republic's proposal.

What is known:

- When we moved to our current Soap Creek Valley home in 1985, we never smelled the dump unless we were right on Coffin Butte Road. Starting about 15 years ago, the dump's odor at our house is apparent whenever the wind blows from the east or north. This squarely contravenes Benton County's goal of "maintaining and improving the quality of the air, water, and land resources."
- The outdoor entertainment area we created 20 years ago at our home is unusable on days when Soap Creek Valley smells like the dump. This has significantly degraded the character of our property.
- The sooner Coffin Butte closes, the better. Western Oregon is a poor location for a landfill as rainfall soaks contributed garbage, leading to huge volumes of toxic leachate and climate warming methane.
- The emitted gas and aerosol cloud from Coffin Butte is massive and continuously spewing into our air, 24 hours a day. I have seen evidence that the detectable plume is over a mile long; imagine the commotion if this continuous eruption were visible. And it's spewing right now! Again, this massively undercuts our County's Comprehensive Plan regarding our natural resources.
- Republic's assertion of no impact from expanding the Coffin Butte landfill is laughable, given the scale of current impact.

What isn't known:

- What evidence does the Environmental Protection Agency have that instigated the January 2025 request to Republic for its environmental compliance records? Republic has yet to share what it knows about the EPA's request.
- What are the long-term effects of chemical aerosols from Coffin Butte settling onto our property, onto us, and into our well water? How much will our health and that of our children be compromised? How much will residents and Benton County have to pay to remediate the effects of "forever chemicals" borne by the plume constantly emanating from the dump? Allowing the landfill to expand will increase both our health risks and the future remediation burden on the County.
- What are the long-term effects of dumping millions of gallons of toxic leachate into the Willamette River? How much will remediation cost taxpayers? Allowing the

landfill to expand will increase the undue burden on Oregon and federal government.

- Republic has suggested that an expanded landfill will somehow be less harmful than its existing operation but has offered nothing to substantiate this claim. If Republic actually has a plan to reduce the adverse impacts of Coffin Butte, why wasn't that implemented prior to this request for expansion?

While Republic Services alleges their proposed expansion of the Coffin Butte landfill won't further degrade the character of northern Benton County, the company has fallen far short of meeting the burden of proof. On the basis of what is known about the landfill and the many as-yet answered questions, please deny this expansion and thereby affirm Benton County's core value of protecting all its residents.



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