

From: [BECKY MERJA](#)
To: [Benton Public Comment](#)
Subject: Oppose / Deny LU-24-027
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2025 8:43:09 AM
Attachments: [2025 Comp Plan Merja.pdf](#)

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Dear Planning Commissioners,
I would like to submit my testimony regarding LU-24-027 into the record.
Respectfully,
Becky Merja
Corvallis, OR

April 17, 2025
To: Planning Commissioners
Re: LU-24-027

Please DENY LU-24-027.

I bought property in Soap Creek Valley in 1979. For 46 years I have watched this area evolve from rural countryside, with farming and forestry activities to a massive industrial complex that generates noise, traffic, litter and a stench that permeates the air for miles. The proposed new landfill will be a mirror image of the current landfill operation which **Does seriously interfere with the character of the area (BCC 53.215(1)).**

The Benton County Comprehensive Plan Goals are “The Big Picture” that the Development Codes are based on. The Comp Plan goals reflect the values of our community. ***The following are goals I feel are being violated by the proposed expansion and current landfill operations.***

Goal 3 “Preserve and maintain” Agricultural land.

The applicant has purchased agricultural land ***(as a buffer to landfill operations)*** and pretends to farm. I approached one of the contract farmers about buying hay off landfill property. He informed me that the nitrates in the hay were so high nothing would eat it, rendering that crop useless.

Goal 4 “Preserve and maintain” Forest lands

The applicant proposes to use Forest Conservation land that is currently a buffer to the landfill, as the future location of the leachate ponds. This activity will disturb wildlife, impact adjacent properties and ***further*** diminish recreational experiences in neighboring EE Wilson (BCC 53.215(1)).

Goal 5: “Protect and maintain” Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, Open Space

The applicant has altered the historical shape of Coffin Butte beyond recognition and proposes to do the same to Tampico Ridge. The basin between Coffin Butte and Tampico Ridge is the natural entrance to Soap Creek Valley. Approving this new landfill will result in further defacing of local landmarks and drastically change the historic landscape and view shed of the area (BCC 53.215(1)).

Goal 6: “Maintain and improve” air, water and land resource quality

Air: “Dump Days” If we can smell it, we know air quality has deteriorated. Landfill gases permeate the air for miles.

Water: ALL Landfills LEAK, (let’s assume this one IS leaking, ***because we sure don’t know that it is not***). Ground water supplies 90% of rural residential drinking water - near by Soap Creek drainage is part of the Luckimute Watershed that feeds the Willamette River. Our water resources are in harms way.

Land: “Bio Solids”, from the Corvallis Wastewater Treatment Plant settling ponds, are spread on agricultural lands. Those “Bio Solids” contain whatever toxins settle out of the dump leachate (“garbage juice”) that is trucked to that facility.

Goal 7: “Protect people, property & environment from” Natural Hazards.

Wildfires are becoming more common; the current landfill emits explosive levels of methane creating fuel for a catastrophic fire event.

Earthquakes, when the “big shake” hits, it won’t matter how well engineered the landfill cells are, there will be contamination that will impact water, air, and land for generations.

Goal 10: “Provide” Housing.

The applicant has purchased Rural Residential properties (*as a buffer*) to landfill operations. This removes RR land that was once available to families who would like to live close to town yet in a rural setting.

Goal 11 Public Facilities & Services:

The landfill, all its heavy traffic and explosive levels of methane, are in Adair Rural Fire and Rescue District jurisdiction. This District is primarily staffed by volunteers who have day jobs. The bigger the landfill gets the bigger the burden is on emergency services. (BCC 53.215(2))

Goal 12: “Provide safe, efficient, cost-effective” Transportation

The applicant proposes to create a new landfill on Tampico Ridge (South of Coffin Butte Rd.), while continuing operations to the North of Coffin Butte Rd. The combined Construction and Landfill traffic will impact user safety and *further* degrade the travel surface. Camp Adair Rd. and Independence Hwy have already been heavily impacted by landfill site preparation. The burden of repair falls on taxpayers. (BCC 53.215(2))

Goal 15: “Protect, conserve, restore, enhance” Willamette River Greenway.

More than 30 million gallons of dump leachate (“garbage juice”) is trucked to two wastewater treatment plants (that are not equipped to filter out the toxins) and released into the Willamette River. How does this practice “protect, conserve, restore, enhance” this resource?

LU-24-027 is not supported by any of these goals. In Benton County, we pride ourselves on being environmentally conscious and progressive, will our actions on this issue reflect those community values? **Please deny LU-24-027 conditional use permit.**

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