

**From:** [BECKY MERJA](#)  
**To:** [Benton Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** LU-24-027 Testimony - Merja  
**Date:** Friday, April 18, 2025 9:25:29 AM  
**Attachments:** [2025 Emerson Vineyard - Merja.pdf](#)

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Good Morning,

Attached is my written testimony in opposition of LU-24-027 CUP application to expand the dump.

Respectfully,

Becky Merja

April 18, 2025

To: Planning Commission

Re: LU-24-027, Conditional Use Permit application to expand Coffin Butte Landfill.

**AREA OF IMPACT:**

This application proposes to expand an operation that **seriously impacts the character of the area as well as neighboring communities and counties (BCC 53.215(1)).**

**ODOR-**

(BCC 53.215(1))

- **Seriously Interferes with Uses on Adjacent Properties**
- **Seriously Impacts the Character of the Area**

Landfill emissions produce an unbearable odor that significantly impacts the lives of nearby residents, preventing them from going outside, working their farms, engaging in normal outdoor enjoyment and *even tanking a land sale.*

**Emerson Vineyard land sale fell through because of dump stench.**

Emerson Vineyard is 4 miles North of the landfill. Below is an excerpt from a March 2, 2023 article in the *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* titled:

**Ill wind sours plans to sell Emerson Vineyards**

by David Hayes

*... the Johns [Emerson Vineyard owners Tom & Jane Johns] put the entire property on the market as acreage and a vineyard, hoping to get a \$1.5 million offer. Two weeks ago, they had their buyers. A couple offered to buy the property but not the winery. The Johns accepted, decided to shut down and let all their employees go. Then a literal ill wind scuttled the deal.*

*“The day they decided to quit was the day a south wind blew up from the dump. He was allergic to it and got violent migraines. They cried about it, just couldn’t make it work,” Tom said, totally understanding, not wanting the potential buyers to discover the ailment after he and Jane were gone. “So, we’re back to square one.”* (Link to the full article at the end.)

“Dump Days” are in direct conflict with Benton County’s 2040 Thriving Communities Core Values of:

- High Quality of Life
- High Environmental Quality
- Well-Being and Health
- Easy Access to the Outdoors
- Stimulating Local Business

This landfill was never planned or anticipated to grow to this scale. Please **deny LU-24-027**

Respectfully,

Rebecca Merja  
27407 Writsman Creek Dr.  
Corvallis, OR  
97330

Emerson Article:

[https://www.polkio.com/news/ill-wind-sours-plans-to-sell-emerson-vineyards/article\\_3224d8c4-b936-11ed-bb64-076dd08dd060.html](https://www.polkio.com/news/ill-wind-sours-plans-to-sell-emerson-vineyards/article_3224d8c4-b936-11ed-bb64-076dd08dd060.html)

**From:** [BECKY MERJA](#)  
**To:** [Benton Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** LU-24-027 CUP to expand CBL -Merja  
**Date:** Friday, April 18, 2025 9:36:59 AM  
**Attachments:** [2025 LU-24-027 Merja.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Another submission for the record, LU -24-027.  
Thanks,  
Becky Merja

April 18, 2025

To: Planning Commission

Re: **LU-24-027, Conditional Use Permit application for:**

**A BRAND-NEW LANDFILL ON TAMPICO RIDGE, South of Coffin Butte Rd.**

I have been a resident of Soap Creek Valley since 1979, Coffin Butte Landfill lies 5 miles North. Please note that in most cases, the impact of new development to an area is uncertain, because the use does not yet exist. However, in this case the expected impacts of an expansion, which is really a NEW landfill, are relatively well-defined, mirroring those of the existing landfill facility.

**AREA OF IMPACT:**

**Is much larger than the Benton County Code or the applicant defines.**

The applicant has fallen WAY short of identifying the geographic area the current landfill, and proposed new landfill, impacts. This application proposes to create a new landfill on Tampico ridge, to expand an operation that **seriously impacts the character of the “immediate” area (BCC 53.215(1))**, *as well as a much broader swath of neighboring communities and counties.*

**ODOR-**

(BCC 53.215(1))

- **Seriously Interferes with Uses on Adjacent Properties**
- **Seriously Impacts the Character of the Area**

Each year, more and more, residents for miles around the landfill experience “dump days” – days when the odor from the landfill gasses prevents them from being outside their homes, working their farms, or otherwise enjoying the outdoors. To name a few locations; I have experienced “landfill gas stench” at my home (5 miles from landfill), in Airlie (Polk Co. 6mi.), at Good Samaritan Hospital (8 mi.), North Albany (7 mi.).

Whenever the weather creates an inversion over the area, the landfill gas generated by the 17 + million tons of garbage in the landfill is trapped, sometimes these inversions last for days.

“Dump Days” are in direct conflict with Benton County’s *2040 Thriving Communities Core Values* of:

- High Quality of Life
- High Environmental Quality
- Well-Being and Health
- Easy Access to the Outdoors
- Stimulating Local Business

**TRASH – ALONG ROADSIDES AND BEYOND**

(BCC 53.215(1))

- **Seriously Impacts the Character of the Area - “And Beyond”.**

Approximately every 90 seconds, a truck arrives at Coffin Butte Landfill to dump trash, 256,000 round trips a year. Inevitably these vehicles spew trash into surrounding areas either on their way in or on their way out. Every road leading to the landfill has an accumulation of trash that migrates into waterways, front yards, natural areas and onto farmland; trash and farm equipment don't play well together (BCC 53.215(1) **Interferes with the Purpose of the Zone EFU.**

## **LANDFILL TRUCK TRAFFIC**

(BCC 53.215(2))

- **DOES Impose an Undue Burden on Public Improvements**

Traffic generated by the landfill creates congestion on roadways; dangerous intersection experiences, obstacles on roadway that have fallen off dump bound loads; physical damage to roadways from heavy use by garbage and leachate trucks. Coffin Butte Rd, Camp Adair Rd. and Independence Hwy are worse for wear.

In 1979 when I purchased my property the landfill was supposed to reach capacity and close in the year 2000. Never was this landfill intended to or expected to become an operation of this magnitude. **Please “just say NO” to LU-24-027**

Respectfully,  
Rebecca Merja  
27407 Writsman Creek Dr.  
Corvallis, OR  
97330