

From: [Morrell, Jeffrey](#)
To: [Benton Public Comment](#)
Subject: LU 24-027 Proposed Landfill Expansion
Date: Saturday, April 19, 2025 7:30:25 PM
Attachments: [Morrell Coffin Butte Expansion Comments 19 April.docx](#)

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Attached you will find my comments regarding the proposed expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill. We strongly urge the Planning Commission to deny this application.

I am writing this comment in regard to Republic's proposed expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill.

By way of background, we have owned our house at 38464 Highway 99W for over 40 years. Our property is approximately 1 km south of the landfill and the proposed expansion will be just over the hill from our house. I have also served on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) and the Disposal Site Advisory Committee (DSAC) for over 16 years and am very familiar with the current operation as well as how it has changed. Most recently, I served briefly on the revived DSAC but had to resign as I took a five year position in South Australia; however, our son now lives in our house, and we continue to be registered voters in Benton County.

At the start, I will state that I have no problem with the position of the current landfill site. It was there before we purchased our house and will be there in one form or another long after we pass from the earth. However, for the entire time I served on the SWAC and DSAC, we were continually told that the landfill had decades of capacity and had no intention to cross the road. We were also told that the land to the south was purchased as buffer, not destined to be active landfill.

When the landfill was owned by Valley Landfills, we were impressed with their forward thinking in terms of methane generation through the co-generation facility and, temporarily, through their attempt at reverse osmosis to treat their leachate water. These illustrated a company that while working to be profitable, was embedded in the community. Although many of the people who worked with Valley remain, the approach has changed dramatically since Republic has assumed ownership with markedly increased fill rates and, as we notice it, more odor issues. We have never reported these because we have accepted the reality of our location.

I have read through the documents provided by Republic in their application and have

the following comments

Traffic: This proposal differs from the previous plan in that it no longer proposes immediately closing Coffin Butte Road to markedly increase landfill capacity; however, it would be disingenuous for the Planning Commission and the County Commissioners to consider this proposal in isolation and ignore the previous proposal for a much larger expansion with the associated closure of Coffin Butte Road.

This proposal really sets the stage for the inevitable increasing landfill footprint, leading to the eventual road closure that Republic desires. Closure of Coffin Butte Road will eliminate the one well-constructed access to Highway 99W from the Soap Creek Valley. This is critical in inclement weather because residents will be forced to use either Sulphur Springs Road or Tampico Road, both of which are narrow and difficult to drive under winter conditions. This will slow emergency response time, potentially creating life threatening situations.

Alternatively, drivers could take Tampico Road heading north around Coffin Butte to exit on either Robison or Airlie Roads. All of this is currently on unimproved dirt track. Multiple tests driving from the junction of Tampico and Sulphur Springs Roads showed that this detour resulted in an increased driving time of 15 minutes to reach Highway 99W.

The current proposal only offers to improve Coffin Butte Road in the areas directly impacted by the expansion but makes no provision for further improvements, leaving these costs to the county and local residents.

It is hard to examine this proposal as a single submission without considering how it will support continued expansion to the south of Coffin Butte Road nor is it hard to imagine that County would not want to continue receiving the millions of dollars in unencumbered funds it receives annually from landfill activities.

Odor Issues: Odors are a reality at any landfill, although we do appreciate Republic's attempts to minimise this issue through landfill gas collection, tarping and daily cover. However, moving the landfill further south will inevitably result in increased odor complaints. As noted earlier, we have noted many more days when we can detect the landfill, but normally do not complain as we see little purpose, especially when we learned that most of these complaints go to the State who then talks to the landfill operators and dismisses them. Residents will be forced to deal with increasing odors. The smell alone is an issue, the recent reports from flyovers suggest that methane levels are often far in excess of minimum effects levels. Expansion will further increase local methane exposure regardless of attempts to capture some of the releases. This has the

potential to impact the health of local residents.

Future Capacity: It is a reality that all landfills eventually reach their designed capacity and close. We have already seen this in several other Willamette Valley facilities. Furthermore, most regions are seeking alternative disposal strategies that place landfills as the last option for dealing with municipal solid waste. Alternatively, landfills are being sited in more remote areas with lower rainfall to reduce some of the environmental impacts (e.g Arlington, Oregon).

Many of the emerging technologies are less financially attractive, but they create opportunities for reuse in the circular economy. Corvallis and Benton County have both been leaders in identifying local, environmentally appropriate strategies for dealing with waste. Expanding the landfill to permit continued decades of disposal goes against this overall strategy.

In summary, the proposed expansion of the Coffin Butte facility will result in increased traffic, more odor issues, potential health issues and a general approach that will readily facilitate continued expansion at the expense of the adjoining properties. We respectfully ask that the Planning Commission carefully consider and deny this proposal as it does little to benefit the local community and has the potential to do greater harm to the surrounding area.

To: Benton County Planning Commission
From: Jeffrey Morrell
38464 Highway 99W
Corvallis, OR 97330
Re: LU24-027 Coffin Butte Landfill Expansion Proposal

I am writing this comment in regard to Republic's proposed expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill.

By way of background, we have owned our house at 38464 Highway 99W for over 40 years. Our property is approximately 1 km south of the landfill and the proposed expansion will be just over the hill from our house. I have also served on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) and the Disposal Site Advisory Committee (DSAC) for over 16 years and am very familiar with the current operation as well as how it has changed. Most recently, I served briefly on the revived DSAC but had to resign as I took a five year position in South Australia; however, our son now lives in our house, and we continue to be registered voters in Benton County.

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When the landfill was owned by Valley Landfills, we were impressed with their forward thinking in terms of methane generation through the co-generation facility and, temporarily, through their attempt at reverse osmosis to treat their leachate water to keep all of the leachate on site. These illustrated a company that while working to be profitable, was embedded in the community. Although many of the people who worked with Valley remain, the approach has changed dramatically since Republic has assumed ownership with markedly increased fill rates and, as we notice it, more odor issues. We have never reported these because we have accepted the reality of our location.

I have read through the documents provided by Republic in their application and have the following comments

Traffic: This proposal differs from the previous plan in that it no longer proposes immediately closing Coffin Butte Road to markedly increase landfill capacity; however, it would be disingenuous for the Planning Commission and the County Commissioners to consider this proposal in isolation and ignore the previous proposal for a much larger expansion with the associated closure of Coffin Butte Road.

The logistics of having a public highway running between landfill cells will be daunting and will ultimately lead to a request to close the road to the public. This proposal really sets the stage for the inevitable increasing landfill footprint, leading to the eventual road closure that Republic desires.

Closure of Coffin Butte Road will eliminate the one well-constructed access to Highway 99W from the Soap Creek Valley. This is critical in inclement weather because residents will be forced to use either Sulphur Springs Road or Tampico Road, both of which are narrow and difficult to drive under winter conditions. This will slow emergency response time, potentially creating life threatening situations.

Alternatively, drivers could take Tampico Road heading north around Coffin Butte to exit on either Robison or Airlie Roads. All of this is currently on unimproved dirt track. Multiple tests driving from the junction of Tampico and Sulphur Springs Roads showed that this detour resulted in an increased driving time of 15 minutes to reach Highway 99W. This delay could be lethal for emergency responses.

The current proposal only offers to improve Coffin Butte Road in the areas directly impacted by the expansion but makes no provision for further improvements, leaving these costs to the county and local residents.

It is hard to examine this proposal as a single submission without considering how it will support continued expansion to the south of Coffin Butte Road nor is it hard to imagine that County would not want to continue receiving the millions of dollars in unencumbered funds it receives annually from dramatically increased landfill activities.

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In summary, the proposed expansion of the Coffin Butte facility will result in increased traffic, more odor issues, potential health issues and a general approach that will readily facilitate continued expansion at the expense of the adjoining properties. We respectfully ask that the Planning Commission carefully consider and deny this proposal as it does little to benefit the local community and has the potential to do greater harm to the surrounding area.

Sincerely

Jeffrey Morrell

38464 Highway 99W