

**From:** [Tom Hewes](#)  
**To:** [Benton Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** coffin Butte testimony against CUP  
**Date:** Monday, April 21, 2025 4:58:15 PM

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Date: April 19, 2025

Reference: LU-24-027, Coffin Butte Landfill Conditional Use Permit Application

To: Benton County Planning Commission

Benton County Community Development  
4500 SW Research Way  
Corvallis, OR 97333-1139

**Thomas Hewes, <mailto:thomashewes11@gmail.com>, 37368 Blue Heron Rd, Corvallis, OR 97330 File Number [LU-21-047**

My name is Thomas Hewes. First, thank you for truly listening tonight.

My wife, Audrey Perkins, and I live in Soap Creek Valley at **37368 Blue Heron Rd, Corvallis, OR 97330**, about five miles south of the landfill. Hearing that very fact has caused some members of the county staff to dismiss my and other neighbors' concerns, using the glib term NIMBY- not in my back yard. This dismissal of Benton County residents' contributions to our shared governance strikes me as a convenient way of not having to consider complex issues and is both irresponsible and not wise governance.

Another comment made was that we are a small yet vocal minority that doesn't represent the thousands of Benton County residents who don't seem to object to this expansion approval, a fact that some committee members felt was obvious since those thousands of residents not living close by are not here objecting. Again, this does not reflect wise thinking. Consider that our location means that we are the ones who are aware of what is going on and thus are spending hours and hours and hours researching and considering the wisdom of this expansion so that we understand its implications. Rather than casting us as exceptions, it is prudent to reframe that as casting us as extremely informed representatives of Benton County.

My contribution to this discussion will be brief and quite personal but, I think, should raise some red flags.

In the 30 years that we have lived here in Soap Creek Valley, just on my little stretch of road—so, within a three quarter of a mile stretch—6 of 8 households have had someone contract cancer. That's 75% of this one sample area. Three of those households have had a family member die from cancer (ages 48,58,58), and the other three, including myself, are fighting

for our lives. These are all long term residents of Soap Creek Valley. So far we have found an additional 7 cancer cases for a total of 13 in Soap Creek area. There are more cases that we don't know about as of today.

I am not saying that the landfill is responsible for any of this. But when I was diagnosed with a blood cancer, the first question I was asked was about any environmental toxins that I might have been exposed to. We often smell the gases from the landfill drifting our way, and there is no way for me to dismiss the possibility that— despite the regulations being followed—that anyone exposed to these fumes might end up in future statistics like mine. We know that the gene mutations that cause cancer are linked to environmental factors.

I am not laying the blame on the Coffin Butte site for our misfortune. But I am saying that to approve this expansion without really doing the rigorous testing needed to make **sure** that we are safe with even *more* of these fumes heading our way nor the increased potential of contamination of our water supply.

Therefore, I conclude by saying that this CUP proposal interferes with my personal property and the character of the area. Please reject this CUP.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

**From:** [Tom Hewes](#)  
**To:** [Benton Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** coffin Butte CUP testimony  
**Date:** Monday, April 21, 2025 4:52:39 PM

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To: Benton County Planning Commission

Benton County Community Development  
4500 SW Research Way  
Corvallis, OR 97333-1139

My name is Thomas Hewes and my wife, Audrey Perkins, and I own property at 37368 Blue Heron Rd, Corvallis 97330.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the future of the Coffin Butte Landfill, a county planning decision of great concern to our neighborhood. My wife and I lived in the Soap Creek valley for 30 years and in Benton County for 51 years. Our property is 5 miles south of the landfill and we are adversely affected by the landfill stench, the noise and the pollution of water and airspace. I oppose any further expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill and urge the Planning Commission to reject this application.

We believe the Planning Commission will find that the Applicant, Republic Services, has not been honest about their activities and have not provided evidence that conditional use permit issuance would not violate County Development Code criteria and Comprehensive Plan policies.

The proposed expansion would seriously interfere with the use of our land and the use of land surrounding the landfill. Furthermore, any approval of Application LU-24-027 would directly violate Benton County Code criteria 53.215(1): *The proposed use does not seriously interfere with uses on adjacent property, with the character of the area, or with the purpose of the zone*; and BCC 53.215(2): *The proposed use does not impose an undue burden on any public improvements, facilities, utilities, or services available to the area.*

The PFAS—which are forever chemicals contained in the leachate that Coffin Butte produces— are currently trucked to public wastewater treatment plants in Corvallis and Salem, both of which discharge into the Willamette River. The last five years PFAS levels have ranged from 25.6 to 31.8 million gallons per year, with an average of 28.5. Last year the amount was 29.1 million gallons. These leachate tanker trucks have a capacity of 7,000 gallons, which means they are making 6 to 13 trips per day to effectively dump this toxic leachate into our river.

That PFAS laden leachate is ending up in the water we drink and in our bodies. Future generations are drinking the PFAS-laden water. That is in violation of Benton County Comprehensive Plan policy 6.5.5 (*“Benton County shall strive for the safe storage, collection, reduction, reuse, recovery, and appropriate disposal of hazardous waste materials.”*)

For 30 years we have lived and witnessed the landfill grow, especially in the last 15 years.

We can see the landfill from our property, and it is a canker sore in the beautiful landscape of Benton County. Coffin Butte Landfill also pollutes the water we drink and the air we breathe.

The proposed expansion does nothing to align with Benton County’s 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative. This expansion undermines our shared goals for responsible, environmental stewardship, prioritizing public health, and sustainable waste management.

I believe Benton County should invest in waste reduction, recycling, and circular economy solutions, not expanding landfills that perpetuate pollution and place a long-term burden on local communities!

Please reject LU-24-027. Thank you for your consideration and for protecting the health and future of Benton County and its residents.