

From: [Priya Thakkar](#)
To: [Benton Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Mark Yeager](#); [Joel Geier](#)
Subject: Oppose/Deny LU-24-027 from local farm
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 1:32:44 PM

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My name is Priya Thakkar, I am the owner and operator of Raising Joy Farm, a cut flower farm located at 38987 Arena Rd, approximately 2 miles (almost 3.5 by road) from Coffin Butte Road. This is outside of the area identified in the staff report as an adjacent property, but I want to assure you that the impact of the landfill reaches far beyond that area. I have a direct view of the landfill and can see lights from the operations, and am certainly close enough to smell, and be sickened by, the stench coming from the landfill operations. The new site will be relatively the same distance to my home and fields, but will increase the surface facing the west, which is where my property is located.

I am writing because I strongly oppose Republic Services' Conditional Use Permit application LU-24-027 to expand the Coffin Butte landfill. I urge the Planning Commission to deny this application.

As a small farmer, I wanted to highlight the considerably increased anxiety, distress, and inconvenience that would be caused by the landfill expansion and the impact on my ability to make use of my property.

Small farms operate on razor thin profit margins, and small farmers often farm with the simple goal of making enough to survive and support their farm. As a farmer, I have worked 70-80 hour weeks, in all weather conditions, just to break even financially. Farmer mental health is a significant concern, and farmers are 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide than the rest of the population (<https://www.visionwestnd.com/research-resources/2024/5/30/the-silent-crisis-mental-health-in-agriculture>). I point out this crisis only to highlight the incredible stress that impacts farmers on a day to day basis and to help illustrate the impact of the landfill expansion could have for local farms and local farmers, who are already facing unbelievable levels of stress on a day to day basis.

In recent years, I have struggled with the intense and sickening odors from the landfill, and this has impacted my ability, as well as my employees' ability to work productively. We have days when the landfill odor is so intense that it makes me nauseous and as a result, I have to balance my ability to work outside and be sick to my stomach, with my need to harvest and process cut flowers, that I need in order to sell and make enough money to sustain my farm. Cut flowers have an unforgiving harvesting timeline, and often even a day away from the fields can result in major crop losses. On a day when the dump stench is strong, I have to decide if I force myself and my employees to work through the smell, in order to not lose money on the product that I need to harvest. This causes an incredible amount of stress, and difficulty with balancing staff needs and retention with the needs of the farm, as well as a significant financial burden.

I have filed complaints with DEQ and the response received from Republic through DEQ is "No odors detected" and that their systems are working, which makes me incredibly concerned that the increased landfill area and increased space facing my property would only increase the odors that Republic claims to not detect.

Pest management is an important and incredibly stressful concern for small farms, such as my own. I have worked hard to create an environment that invites pollinators, songbirds, beneficial insects, to minimize my use of pesticides, but with the knowledge and understanding that an upset to the ecosystem could cause an infestation that can devastate a crop. An increase of birds that are attracted to the landfill, drives away songbirds and larger birds (Great Blue Herons and Hawks) who manage the voles and mice on our farm. These changes to the ecosystem have an impact on the pests present on crops, resulting in either costly increases in pesticide use or crop loss/failure. In the almost 10 years that we have owned our farm, there has been a significant increase in the “pest” birds present, as the landfill has continued to grow and grow.

Again, I want to express my opposition to Republic Services’ Conditional Use Permit application LU-24-027 to expand the Coffin Butte landfill. I urge the Planning Commission to deny this application. The proposed expansion would cause significant distress to small farms and farmers in the area, such as myself, and seriously interfere with the use of our nearby property **BCC 53.215 (1)**.

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

Sincerely,
Priya Thakkar, Raising Joy Farm
Corvallis, OR 97330