

From: [Phil Carver](#)
To: [Benton Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Schepke Jim](#); [Laurie Dougherty](#)
Subject: 350 Salem Comments on Coffin Butte Landfill
Date: Monday, May 5, 2025 10:37:28 PM
Attachments: [Coffin Butte comments to Benton County Planning Commissioners.pdf](#)

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To the Benton County Commissioners

350 Salem OR strongly opposes Republic Services' Conditional Use Permit application LU-24-027 to expand the Coffin Butte landfill. We urge the Planning Commission to deny this application.

Please see attached comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Philip H. Carver, Ph.D.
Co-coordinator 350 Salem OR

Dear Benton County Planning Commissioners,

350 Salem OR endorses the recent comments by Jim Scheppke of Salem. We strongly oppose expansion of the Coffin Butte Landfill.¹

These comments are on behalf of the several hundred Salem members and supporters of 350 Salem. 350 Salem (350salemor.org) is a chapter of 350.org, an international organization fighting against climate change.

Salem is the largest municipal source of waste sent to the Coffin Butte Landfill.

In addition to the concerns raised by Mr. Scheppke, there are large and poorly measured methane emissions from the Coffin Butte Landfill. Landfills in wet climates, such as Benton County, have inherently more methane emissions from wet organic products (paper, waste food, etc.) that are “eaten” by anaerobic archaea. The process is called [methanogenesis](#). It is the primary pathway for breaking down organic matter placed in landfills. In drier climates it is easier to keep water out and substantially reduce methane emissions.

There is an additional concern about the disposal of leachate from the landfill in Salem sewers. A substantial part of the PFAS (a mix of toxic forever-chemicals) in the leachate gets incorporated into the sewage sludge at the Willow Lake sewage treatment plant. This sludge is sold to farmers, without being tested for PFAS, to be spread on non-food croplands. The PFAS then leaks into the soil and groundwater. The City of Salem and the State of Oregon have done little to address this terrible situation.

The methane and leachate problems would be greatly reduced by sending the municipal waste to drier landfill east of the Cascade Mountains.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Philip H. Carver, Ph.D.
Natural Resource and Utility Economics
Johns Hopkins U., 1978

¹ I am writing because 350 Salem OR strongly opposes Republic Services' Conditional Use Permit application LU-24-027 to expand the Coffin Butte landfill. I urge the Planning Commission to deny this application.