

*from the desk of
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SB 726: Modernizing Methane Detection and Repair at Oregon Landfills and Boost Energy Resources

[SB 726](#) enables the use of modern GIS software and more advanced methane detection technology to find and repair emission leaks at landfills. By finding and fixing undetected methane leaks, landfill operators can capture more methane for energy production and reduce harmful emissions that threaten public health and nearby communities. This bill mirrors successful efforts in other states, such as California, Colorado, and Pennsylvania, that have integrated advanced technology into landfill methane monitoring programs.

SB 726 achieves this by directing the state to undergo a rulemaking process, [which includes stakeholder input and cost considerations](#). Key provisions of SB 726 include:

- **Expand Monitoring Technology:** Deploy drone-based or other available advanced monitoring technologies to identify methane plumes across the entire landfill surface. [Pennsylvania](#) used advanced sensing technologies to create quantifiable reductions in greenhouse gases.
- **Improve Data Sharing and Efficiency:** Simplify the submission of required monitoring data by using GIS data formats.
- **Facilitate Methane Leak Repairs, Reduce Harmful Emissions:** Enable quick identification and repair of malfunctioning gas collection systems, reducing fugitive emissions of methane and harmful toxic gases like benzene. [Scientists deployed](#) remote sensing technology at California's Sunshine Canyon Landfill, which helped identify site interventions that led to increased methane capture and less odor complaints from nearby residents.
- **Boost Renewable Energy Resources:** Fixing undetected methane leaks helps landfills capture more gas (rather than it being released to the atmosphere). Landfill operators can use that resource to generate more energy to provide electricity to local homes and businesses.

Why a Yes Vote on SB 726 Matters:

- **Methane Leaks are Invisible and Dangerous:** Modern methane detection technology is needed to pinpoint and accurately locate methane leaks. U.S. EPA inspections have uncovered troubling methane exceedances at Oregon landfills, including *explosive* levels over 10,000 parts per million at Benton County's Coffin Butte landfill that operators had not located using a handheld sensor. Fortunately, advanced methane sensing technology such as planes, drones, and satellites are proven, operational and can be readily deployed.
- **Landfills are the third largest source of human-related methane emissions** in the U.S. In Oregon, landfills reported emissions at an estimated 2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent of methane in 2022 (Source: U.S. EPA).
- **There is Urgency:** Reducing methane emissions is one of the most impactful actions we can take in the short term to slow climate change. Landfills, as Oregon's largest source of methane emissions, must be a priority.
- **Protect Public Health:** Landfills also leak leachate and toxic air pollutants that harm the health of nearby communities (Hillsboro, Adair Village, Medford, etc.), including carcinogens like hydrogen sulfide, benzene and toluene. Methane plumes can signal the emissions of other invisible pollutants like volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and PFAS (the "forever chemicals").

