

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Environment committee, my name is Mark Yeager.

I am a registered environmental engineer in Oregon and have previously served for many years on the Benton County Solid Waste Advisory Council and the Disposal Site Advisory Committee for the Coffin Butte landfill in Benton County.

I am writing to voice my strong support for Senate Bill 726.

The current monitoring protocols for methane gas at Oregon landfills are woefully inadequate, relying on a person with a hand-held measurement device to detect methane levels. The rules also allow the landfill operator to exclude much of the surface of the landfill from monitoring by claiming certain areas are not safe for a person to walk. Thus, the reported results are not representative of the gases leaking from the landfill, and dramatically under-report methane emissions.

By way of example, the EPA inspections of the Coffin Butte landfill in 2022 and 2024 documented over 100 uncontrolled methane leaks, with many reported concentrations levels at orders of magnitude greater than the limit of 500 parts per million. Some measured concentrations exceeded 100,000 parts per million.

At the same time, the landfill operator conducted its own monitoring and reported very few leaks at much lower concentrations.

The non-profit organization Carbon Mapper, Inc., uses satellite technology to measure methane concentrations and has flown over Coffin Butte landfill numerous times. I am attaching one image of a recent survey of Coffin Butte. The documented methane plume is massive.

While methane is an odorless gas, landfill gas contains many air pollutants that do have an odor including nonmethane organic compounds (NMOCs) such as benzene, methyl ethyl ketone, toluene, and xylenes. In addition, new studies are showing evidence of airborne PFAS compounds in landfill gas. As an indication of how much gas is leaking from Coffin Butte, my home is about 5 miles south of the landfill, and I routinely smell the landfill gas at my home and in my neighborhood.

SB 726 is a necessary bill that will protect the public's health through enhanced methane monitoring, ensuring the landfill methane emissions are accurately measured and reported, and allowing action to be taken to fix leaks and reduce all landfill gas emissions.

I want to thank Senator Gelser Blouin and the other sponsors for bringing this important bill forward for your consideration.

I urge your support of SB 726.

Sincerely,

Mark Yeager