

TO: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
RE: Support of SB 726 Coffin Butte Methane Monitoring Bill
DATE: 1/23/25

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment:

I am Professor Janet Lorenzen. I live in Salem and teach at Willamette University. I am writing to express my **strong support for SB 726**.

The trash from my home and workplace go to Coffin Butte landfill. As an environmental sociologist I have been following the news about the Coffin Butte landfill and the unusually high amount of methane leaks there (see links to news articles below). One article from the Statesman Journal stated that **some methane levels “were so high during an inspection that instruments could not measure them”** (Tracy Lowe Oct 20, 2023).

Methane is a catastrophically powerful greenhouse gas. Methane is more than 28 times as potent as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. The [EPA reports](#) that “over the last two centuries, methane concentrations in the atmosphere have more than doubled, largely due to human-related activities.” Landfills are the third largest source of human-generated methane. **This requires immediate action.**

Union employees at the landfill put themselves in danger to reach all parts of the landfill for monitoring. However, technology for monitoring has vastly improved. There is no need to put workers at risk. There has been a **revolution in the [technology to monitor methane at landfills](#)**.

You have the power to address this serious problem. SB 726 will expand technology monitoring of landfills, facilitate methane leak repairs, and improve data sharing and efficiency at the DEQ.

I urge your support of SB 726.

Sincerely,
Prof. Janet Lorenzen
Salem

NEWS ON METHANE LEAKS

Methane leaks at Coffin Butte Landfill in Oregon pose 'potential safety concern,' EPA says: Some levels were so high during an inspection that instruments could not measure them.

<https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/local/2023/10/20/methane-leaks-republic-services-coffin-butte-landfill-benton-county-oregon/71210509007/>

EPA inspection uncovered methane leaks at Benton County landfill

<https://www.opb.org/article/2025/01/18/epa-inspection-coffin-butte-methane-leak/>

A huge landfill in Oregon is spewing methane. Its owners want to expand.

<https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/methane/a-huge-landfill-in-oregon-is-spewing-methane-its-owners-want-to-expand>