

Submitter: Christina Kroker

TO: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

RE: Support of SB 726 Coffin Butte Methane Monitoring Bill

DATE: February 24, 2025

Dear Chair Sollman and members of the Energy and Environment Committee,

I am Christina Kroker, a 20 year old college student attending Willamette University studying Environmental Science and Studio Art. Like many who attend out-of-state higher education facilities, I plan to live near where I currently reside for academic purposes. I need to do everything possible to ensure my future, and the future of other current and future Oregonians are safe, healthy, and sustainable. Pollution is becoming an increasing threat and landfills are a major contributor. Through the short-term commitment of SB 726, we can create long-term benefits for all of Oregon.

If we know we keep adding to landfills, we should know what is coming out of them. Emissions are harmful for public health and methane is a very powerful pollutant. Methane not only directly harms the health of those exposed to it, it contributes to global warming and therefore increases the likelihood of devastating environmental conditions which can lead to devastating financial losses for companies and individuals alike. Landfill operators should be held accountable for reducing the emissions they release. Their negligence to identify and perform repairs on tarps and other equipment could result in the release of copious amounts of methane into the air. Inspection of the Coffin Butte Landfill on June 21, 2024 is a particularly topical example of how landfill operators are failing their communities and endangering anyone in the surrounding area. Readings at Coffin Butte were above the legal maximum of 500 parts per million, instead having levels ranging from 1000 to 118,000 ppm. This level of methane is at best detectable by local residents who complain about the smell, and at worst potentially combustible and unsafe for workers.

We can, and must, hold them accountable. Through the funding and use of different monitoring equipment, we can more successfully enforce policies already in place. We can upload this data to an accessible and convenient database to help workers enforcing policy save money and time. We can find repair issues in landfills and fix them. We can capture this methane more effectively and use it to power renewable energy sources.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support SB 726. In doing so, SB 726 will hold landfill operators accountable, increase awareness of pollution related issues, help the environment, save money, and improve Oregonian health.

Thank you,
Christina Kroker

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