

I support SB 726 and thank the lawmakers and staff who have brought this bill this far.

Thank you.

Because of budget constraints, DEQ depends on industries to self-report. This is problematic; for-profit operations are sensitive to being seen to be out of regulatory compliance. There is a simple reason for this; being out of compliance opens them up to fines, lawsuits, reputational damage and all of these have the potential to decrease shareholder value. So for-profit companies operating landfills are incentivized to report that they are in compliance. We saw an example of this most recently at Coffin Butte landfill where the EPA and the landfill operator disputed the extent of methane leaks discovered by handheld measuring apparatus.

In addition to this problem of self-reporting, methane emissions models landfill operators use to calculate probable methane emissions are out of date and have been shown to underestimate actual emissions. In some cases, the underestimation is drastic. Please find below a link to the document “Trashing the Climate: Methane from Municipal Landfills.”

<https://environmentalintegrity.org/reports/trashing-the-climate/>

This report, by Environmental Integrity Project, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization established by former EPA enforcement attorneys, is deeply sourced and rebuts most if not all of the testimony offered in opposition to SB 726.

Here are some quotes from that document:

*“The evidence suggests that EPA is significantly underestimating methane emissions from landfills and that stronger regulations are needed.” (p. 7)*

*“New technologies offer better ways to monitor and estimate methane emissions. Airborne measurements of methane emissions at landfills do not correspond with reported emissions. The surveys have shown very large methane plumes over some landfills, often the result of problems with gas control systems and landfill covers” (p. 7)*

*“Despite significant methane emissions from municipal landfills, federal regulators are, so far, not doing enough to curb methane emissions. EPA rules function as a regulatory floor and states are authorized to set more stringent standards.” (p. 8)*

*Aircraft and drone-based techniques can take short-term “snapshots” of landfill methane that can be used to identify and fix leaks. (p. 9)*

Methane emissions contribute substantially to climate change that is of particular danger to Oregon’s economy most immediately because a warming planet increases wildfire risks that put Oregon’s forest and agricultural lands in jeopardy. And, as we have seen in recent years, in Canada, California and Hawaii, global-warming supercharged wildfires can devastate entire communities, and cause loss of life and economic damage in the tens of billions of dollars. Furthermore, we are increasingly learning that fugitive emissions released along with methane in landfills contain tiny particulates – microplastics, heavy metals, and PFAS – that can make us sick.

Since methane emissions contribute substantially to global warming and have potentially harmful human health effects, it is of critical importance that they be measured accurately.

In President Trump's first term, the EPA budget was proposed to be cut by 31%. By the end of Trump's term, his administration had rolled back 98 environmental rules and regulations. It is likely that there will be similar, and probably more drastic impacts in the second Trump term. Therefore, and to protect Oregon and Oregonians, Oregon must implement landfill methane measurement regulations at the state level that are objective, accurate, reliable, and easily enforceable.

Thank you for your time.