

<b>Date:</b>	<b>April 8, 2025</b>
<b>To:</b>	Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy, Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
<b>From:</b>	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager Tim Dooley
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>HB 3794 - Support</b>

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of HB 3794. For the record, I am Tim Dooley, from the Association of Oregon Counties, representing Oregon’s County governments.

AOC is supportive of this task force bill and has been participating in Benton County’s sustainable materials management plan (SMMP) task force, looking at the ways to reduce our solid waste that goes into landfills. Solid waste management is a complex topic that requires a regional approach. Expanding Benton County’s efforts with this task force bill will enable a true regional look at the solid waste system.

Coffin Butte landfill will reach end of life by the end of the next decade. We must begin planning now for that event, as 20% of the state’s population sends their waste to this landfill. As it is unlikely that a new landfill will be sited in the Willamette Valley, waste is almost certainly going to need to be transported to other landfills either in the Columbia River Gorge or in Eastern Oregon. This will require developing an entirely new system for this region to transfer municipal solid waste longer distances, whether that is through trucks, intermodal freight rail, or another method.

This is but one example of why a regional solution is warranted for managing waste post-Coffin Butte. It is a generational opportunity to re-imagine a fractured system into one that can divert more waste from landfills, leverage economies of scale, and work together to develop cost-effective methods for waste management.

Each community selects their waste hauler through a franchise system that is largely independent of one another, with the landfill being the common destination for all. Developing a truly regional approach will require interjurisdictional cooperation, and perhaps legislation to facilitate new concepts or investments. This task force will allow those big ideas to flourish and to build upon the work Benton County has facilitated.

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AOC would note that, as drafted, the task force only includes a representative from one hauler who also operates a landfill - and does not have any positions allocated to smaller communities. We would ask that the bill be amended to include a wider variety of perspectives, including from small haulers and rural areas such as the coast, who have different needs than the I-5 corridor. Bringing all parties together, from haulers, to local governments, to the environmental community, ensures that we will have a wide range of perspectives and can develop solutions that will work for all stakeholders.

Thank you for your time in this important matter.