

Submitter:	Joel Geier
On Behalf Of:	self
Committee:	House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	HB3794

Chair Lively and members of the committee:

As a resident living near Coffin Butte landfill, I appreciate that our legislators, Representative McDonald and Senator Gelser Blouin, have shown genuine concern for the many problems that this landfill operation creates, not just for local residents but for downstream communities (due to the leachate problems) and global climate (due to methane emissions).

The current operation is environmentally destructive and poses a hazard to our communities, in particular because its management is in the hands of a private, for-profit corporation based in Arizona that is economically incentivized to increase, rather than decrease, the amount of garbage that they pile up here in western Oregon.

I applaud the ambitions of this bill, but I cannot support it in its current form, due to five main problems:

1. The current language of the bill guarantees a voting position on the task force, to "a private waste hauler that operates a landfill in the Willamette Valley." For practical purposes, there is really only one such entity, namely the same giant out-of-state corporation that profits from continuing to dump waste at Coffin Butte. You might as well appoint a fox to a governor's task force on hen house safety. This will be damaging to the credibility of this task force, from the very outset.
2. The inclusion of two statewide groups (Association of Oregon Counties and League of Oregon cities) is inappropriate for a task force focused on the Willamette Valley. The leadership of both groups is predominantly from jurisdictions outside of the Willamette Valley region. We note that both groups have recently sided with the landfilling industry, by opposing SB 726 which calls for sensible improvements to monitoring requirements for landfill emissions of greenhouse gases. Please consider drawing on more appropriate groups from the region, such as the Mid-Willamette Council of Governments.
3. By allocating two more voting positions to experts in "the disposal of municipal solid waste" (rather than, for example, the reduction of municipal solid waste," the bill as currently written practically guarantees that 5 of the 8 voting positions will go to insiders or allies of the landfilling industry, rather than advocates of more sustainable

solutions.

4. The apparent (though perhaps unintentional) bias of this bill toward landfilling is amplified in line 22 which mentions only "solid waste disposal in the Willamette Valley" rather than, for example, "reduction and environmentally responsible management of solid waste originating from the region."

5. Citing Benton County's "sustainable materials management plan" (SMMP) process as a starting point is not auspicious, given the troubled history of the Benton County SMMP process. As a member of a public committee that helped to draw up the scope of work for this process, I've seen how it has fallen completely short of all promises of public inclusion. At the same time, Benton County has spent very significant budget (going on \$400K) without producing a single tangible product to date, other than a map of solid-waste infrastructure in Oregon.

Members of the committee, if you don't know about the problems with the Benton County SMMP process, I urge you look into them before you vote on a bill that would compel task force members to use its output as a starting point.

I suggest it would be better to avoid encumbering the proposed task force with whatever might or might not emerge from Benton county's disappointing (though expensive) effort. A better starting point would be a more open and transparent process that truly seeks to engage community voices as well as expertise from outside of the commercial landfilling industry.

Yours sincerely,
Joel Geier