

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba & Levy, members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy & Environment, my name is Major Kate Harris, a former Air Force Evaluator Pilot with a degree in Civil Engineering, a Masters in Public Administration, on a Hospital Board of Directors, and most importantly a mother to 3 elementary aged children in Corvallis.

I am here today in strong support of Senate Bill 726, to discuss the health and safety of the children in and around Adair Village, and to implore that you hold municipal landfills accountable for maintaining safe, ethical, and responsible operations.

The City of Adair Village is a mile and a half due south of Coffin Butte Landfill, a few miles north of Corvallis. It is home to a growing number of families, as multiple hundreds of new homes have been built over the past several years and more will be built shortly in two active developments.

I have 16 extended family members who have lived in and around Adair Village for the past 50 years. My husband was born and raised in Adair Village, and lived there for decades with his four siblings. His parents, sister, and her children still live across the street, now even closer to Coffin Butte. My two oldest children lived in Adair Village for 3 years during infancy, and all three of my children have now lived 4 miles directly south of Coffin Butte Landfill, for the past 7 years. I have numerous friends who are raising their young children in Adair Village, and know hundreds of families who send upwards of 1,000 children to school in Adair Village daily.

The children who live in Adair Village are often outside, regardless of weather or air quality, walking to and from the school bus, playing sports, and playing in their yards. We now know that indoor house air quality can be worse than outside, so families nationwide are encouraged to open and air out their houses, which is increasingly not feasible with the unknown toxins in the air flowing out of Coffin Butte. The children who attend school in Adair Village also must spend time outside each day regardless of weather or air quality, walking between classroom buildings and during recess and physical education, due to limited indoor spaces for these activities.

According to UNICEF, "As children are growing, their developing lungs and brains makes them especially vulnerable to air pollution. Air pollution causes both immediate and long-term health effects in children that can be irreversible. A woman's body can store harmful chemicals from the air, passing them to her baby during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Air pollution can seriously affect the health of the fetus."

According to the EPA, "Research has shown that some people are more susceptible than others to air pollutants. These groups include children, pregnant women, older adults, and individuals with pre-existing heart and lung disease. People in low socioeconomic neighborhoods and communities may be more vulnerable to air pollution because of many factors. Proximity to industrial sources of air pollution, underlying health problems, poor nutrition, stress, and other factors can contribute to increased health impacts in these communities."

Over the past year, I have personally logged 27 very potent days, that we have come to call "Dump Days". On numerous occasions, I have driven around within a 5 mile radius from the landfill, taking note of where it is odiferous. There have been noted days where it does not smell at the landfill itself, but rather it appears the fumes are rising up off the ground, hitting a layer of fog or otherwise denser air, and then being pushed down over the community as far as five or more miles away. Sometimes all the way into Corvallis, most notably at the hospital, or north towards Monmouth.

One such note I wrote on February 9th of this year:

"Horrible stench this morning at 9:30. A heavy, putrid, burnt chemical, hit-you-in-the-face when you just let the dog outside, kind of day. Thankful we did property work yesterday when it was raining. Glad we are heading to town to be outside in the sun, hoping it's not an issue there also."

We are here today, asking you to require stricter methane monitoring of municipal landfills. Methane is an odorless gas, which leaves us to wonder what it really is that we are smelling on these "Dump Days". Methane may be the Canary in the coal mine, but the other VOCs (volatile organic compounds), PFAS, and other toxins are doing unknown harm to the children and families who currently live in, go to school, or will shortly be moving into newly built houses in Adair village.

As we've seen good examples in California, when landfills have more comprehensive data, they are able to pinpoint the problems, resolve the issue, and greatly reduce the amount of methane and other toxic fumes infiltrating their surrounding communities. If your house had a water leak, you would do everything you could to expedite finding its source and stop it before rotted and molded your house from the inside out. Before we rot out these children and communities, who are forced to live under and breathe in these toxic fumes, please require responsible and comprehensive monitoring of municipal landfills in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Major Kate Harris

EPA. (2024, Dec 12). *Research on Health Effects from Air Pollution*. EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/air-research/research-health-effects-air-pollution#:~:text=Children%2C%20the%20elderly%2C%20and%20people,air%20pollution%20are%20especially%20susceptible>.

UNICEF. (2025). *Children and Air Pollution*. Children's Environmental Health Collaborative, UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/emergencies/air-pollution#:~:text=As%20children%20are%20growing%2C%20their,their%20ability%20to%20fight%20it>.