

Chair Lively and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment:

I wish to offer counterarguments to Brent Pawlowski's testimony submitted originally on 2/24/25. Please see my responses to it, inserted in italics, below each of his points:

This bill is for increased methane emission regulations which is already regulated by the EPA. More regulation by Oregon would say, "Oregon does not trust the EPA".

>> This has nothing to do with trust. Oregon needs to take this into its own hands because the EPA, which is a Federal agency, is in the process of being gutted right now so we need the State to take action.

This bill calls for remote sensing measurements (drone, satellite, etc) which are not reliable. For example, a new aerial sensing technology called "carbon mapper" claims to map 'methane clouds' but is highly dependent on weather and wind conditions. Some days show "no methane" while others show variable signals. It would be irresponsible to push landfill operators to use an unproven technology. Also, a landfill owner could just pick the windy days to measure emissions when the signal would be the weakest.

>> The existing "proven technology" of hand-held monitoring by landfill operators is prone to abuse, hence the need for a different system. Refer to the 2022 and 2024 EPA reports on the Coffin Butte Landfill where the landfill operator found little-to-no leaks while the EPA - using the same technology - found massive numbers of them. The hand-held devices which measure methane are subject to human manipulation. Remote, independent measuring technology is needed.

>> Re: "the landfill operators could just pick windy days to measure emissions when the signal would be weakest." This proves my point about manipulation. Landfill operators will manipulate if they can; the monitoring needs to be independent.

It needs to be emphasized that remote, aerial, or drone methane measurement methods are unproven for accurate data. The EPA has NOT developed a test method specification for aerial sensing and neither has the Oregon DEQ. What proponents are asking for does not yet exist.

>> Remote technology (aerial, satellite) can locate methane leaks, and then drones can be used to verify.

Landfills have reduced methane greatly compared to years past. Landfills are now required to cover waste each day and have methane capture.

>> They are indeed "required" to cover waste each day, but there is a big difference between being required to do something and actually doing it. There is ample photographic and aerial methane plume evidence that at the Coffin Butte Landfill, for example, the waste does not get fully covered.

>> Again, they are "required" to have methane capture - but if that methane capture actually worked as it was supposed to, there would be no need for this bill.

Increasing regulation will have no effect on methane losses with current technology. The increased regulation will also trickle-down cost effects on waste disposal. It affects the low-income Oregon residents the most. How is that equitable?

>> This bill is not about "increasing regulation" it is about increasing monitoring so as to locate in real time and reduce methane emissions.

>> The corporate argument about the trickle-down cost effects of waste disposal affecting low-income residents inequitably is tired and old. This is a distraction strategy. The real concern for low-income residents — for ALL residents — is our collective health which is impacted by leaks of landfill gas.

This legislation is being pushed by "beyond toxics". Information and claims by this group should be checked for accuracy. For example, a recent mass mailing claimed landfill leachate was "dumped directly in the Willamette River" which was completely false. The information supplied by this group cannot be trusted.

>> Mr. Pawlowski does not have his facts straight. The recent mailing was not sent out by Beyond Toxics, but by a local community group, VNEQS (Valley Neighbors for Environmental Quality and Safety). And it definitely did not say "dumped directly" — it said "dumped", and this was qualified with further wording that said the leachate "eventually ends up in the Willamette River," which is exactly the case. But this legislation has nothing to do with leachate. I'm sure both Beyond Toxics and VNEQS would welcome anyone checking their information for accuracy.

In Benton County, Republic Services is a large landfill owner and operator. They have shown to be good stewards at complying with regulation and do not have current enforcement action on record in Oregon.

>> Republic Services' will always parade out that "they do not have current enforcement action." They are currently and have been under investigation by the EPA since the 2022 inspection of the Coffin Butte Landfill and EPA has stated that this investigation is ongoing.

Republic Services actually has been acquiring old landfills across the country and bringing them up to modern standards. For example, in the case of Coffin BuYe Landfill in Benton County, Republic Services dug up the old un-lined portion of the landfill and moved to the modern, lined, and protected portion of the property. Landfill operators already do regular methane checks and self-report. This allows continual audits of methane leaks which are immediately corrected per EPA procedure. LANDFILLS ARE ALREADY REQUIRED TO DO WHAT SB726 PROPOSES. Landfill operators have the data available for review at any time. Let us not pile on more regulation.

>> It is this self-monitoring-and-reporting that is the crux of the problem. This is a big chunk of what this legislation is attempting to address.

This legislation will not improve methane or so-called greenhouse gases in a measurable way. It will only increase costs. The EPA has standards and has methodically managed landfill emissions. Oregon should not pile on another layer of regulation.

>> The oil and gas industry now has satellite monitoring and detection of methane leaks (MethaneSAT) - and they welcome this because for them, methane leaks equal loss of money; finding and stopping the leaks is in their best interest. The landfill industry fights increased monitoring because monitoring and having to deal with leaks hurts their profits.

>> I know the Coffin Butte Landfill is only one landfill in Oregon, however it is in a terrible location for a landfill when it comes to generating methane, because of the wet climate in the Willamette Valley. This particular landfill is an accidentally sited one - an accident of WWII, which has been allowed to continue despite chronic problems and proximity to population density. Other landfills in Oregon have been carefully planned and located in remote, arid parts of the state and emit far less methane. The point of SB 726 is to monitor ALL of them, and let the results speak for themselves.

Please **support** and **pass** SB 726. This is an important step forward for Oregon to take. All efforts to quickly and effectively monitor and reduce methane emissions are critical if we are going to have any hope of slowing human- caused climate damage. Many thanks to chief sponsors Senator Gelser Blouin, Taylor and Manning Jr. for this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
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VNEQS