

Chair Lively  
Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy  
Members of the Committee

My name is Gabe Shepherd, and I am a Benton County Commissioner. I am writing to support a “yes” vote on SB 726 A. Though my Commission voted 3-0 to support SB 726 A at a recent meeting, this letter still only represents my views on the matter as an individual elected official.

As you may be aware, my county is home to a regional landfill, Coffin Butte, that serves a large portion of Oregon’s population. There have been constant concerns from community members regarding the methane emissions from this landfill. In 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency held an on-site inspection of Coffin Butte landfill (which is operated by Republic Services). Here is an excerpt of the report which has already been submitted to you in full:

“Daniel Heins expressed potential concerns with Republic’s SEM [Surface Emission Monitoring]/Method 21 procedures. Despite Republic having seen no more than 6 exceedances in the recent SEM reports supplied ahead of the inspection that included penetration monitoring, including reports with 0 exceedances, he identified 61 points in exceedance of 500 ppm, including 21 points above 10,000 ppm, with 26 exceedances at gas collection wells that Republic should have specifically been monitoring on a quarterly basis since the Oregon State Plan became effective in November 2020.”

What this says to me is that, for whatever reason, our local landfill operator was not fully collecting the emissions data for this landfill. To me, this means there is a need to require a better way to monitor methane emissions. I believe this bill will accomplish that.

I will let others speak about the dangers of excessive methane emissions to both the environment and individuals. I will also let professionals speak about how increased monitoring can translate into better mitigation. Here is what *I* will say:

1. You as elected officials know that action can come from concentrated public pressure. This bill will give communities across the state the information they need to put sustained pressure on landfills to operate in a manner that produces less damaging emissions.
2. Hundreds of my residents live within 2 miles of this site and the City of Adair Village, which has about 1,000 people and is growing fast, lies just 1.5 miles away. Members of all political stripes and affiliations are concerned about the impacts that these emissions have on their health, and the risk of fire.

Again, I ask that you move this bill to the floor and support it.

Thank you,



**Commissioner Gabe Shepherd** *(he/him)*

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