

Beyond Toxics

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Eugene, Oregon, 97401



Chair Bowman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Beyond Toxics to ask you to support HB 3971, which clears a land use pathway for construction of the CleanLane Resource Recovery Facility. Beyond Toxics is a Eugene based environmental advocacy group working to build community driven leadership across the state of Oregon to promote access to clean air, water, and healthy food. We have worked with communities across the state of Oregon who are facing the environmental and health consequences of unsustainable waste management and endless landfill expansions. All of these communities are fighting for a zero waste future and CleanLane is a thoughtful and innovative leap forward to that future.

HB 3971 is necessary due to a small technicality in the zoning code that an astroturf organization leveraged to delay the county's implementation of sustainable waste management. The Lane County Garbage and Recycling Association is funded by Waste Connections, the 3rd largest waste management corporation in the United States. After a years-long, thorough RFP process, Sanipac and EcoSort, both owned and operated by Waste Connections, lost their bid to construct their version of CleanLane. As a result, they have used every extra-economic tool available to stop and delay CleanLane.

CleanLane involves multiple waste diversion elements including recycling processing, which is already an allowed use in Light Industrial zoning. However, other waste diversion technologies such as anaerobic digestion fall into a grey area that Waste Connections exploited and this bill seeks to remedy. Lane County could go and clarify its light industrial zoning code to remedy this grey area, but this one-off fix would come at a substantial, unnecessary cost of time, tax dollars, and public resources.

CleanLane is designed to recover valuable resources from waste, which significantly reduces the amount of material sent to landfills while improving environmental sustainability. This project is a huge step forward for responsible materials management in Oregon and serves a model for other counties in the Willamette Valley finding solid waste solutions.

1. Reduction in Landfill Waste: CleanLane is projected to reduce Short Mountain landfill waste by 80,000 tons annually, extending the landfill's lifespan and benefiting our community for years to come.

2. Greenhouse Gas Reduction: The facility will capture more recyclables and convert methane gas into renewable natural gas (RNG) through an anaerobic digester, resulting in a remarkable 57% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This is equivalent to taking 20,000 to 30,000 cars off the road each year.
3. Local Economic Development: Bulk Handling Systems, a local company with 48 years of experience, is contributing 70% of the CleanLane project costs. This partnership not only showcases cutting-edge technology but also enhances employment opportunities locally and demonstrates a commitment to sustainable business practices.
4. Innovation in Waste Management: CleanLane utilizes a proven method for efficiently handling solid waste, ensuring that recyclables are captured and processed effectively. This aligns with Lane County's state mandated target of achieving a 63% recovery rate by 2025, currently at 49.7%.

The benefits of CleanLane extend far beyond environmental impact; they promise to foster green economic growth, improve public health, and create a model for sustainable waste management that can be replicated in other communities. The facility's design has taken every effort to minimize local environmental impacts including hosting all of its operations indoors, which reduces local air pollution and odors.

I urge you to prioritize this initiative by reducing this singular bureaucratic obstacle thrown up by a multibillion dollar cooperation operated out of Texas. Lane County, and the wider Willamette Valley, is counting on its legislators to make forward-thinking decisions that align with our values of sustainability and innovation.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your support for HB 3971 and a greener future for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Mason Leavitt

Beyond Toxics

GIS Analyst and Programs Coordinator