

Coffin Butte Landfill recently withdrew its Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application, which would have allowed it to continue to perform routine disposal operations in another zoned portion of the existing property. We made the decision to withdraw the application so we could do more listening and better understand community perspectives. As we engage with our neighbors and community, we are also taking the opportunity to address any misconceptions about Coffin Butte whenever possible.

Myth vs. Fact

How the proposed expansion at Coffin Butte will impact Odor & Groundwater

MYTH

Coffin Butte poses contamination risks to well water and groundwater.

FACT

Groundwater monitoring at Coffin Butte has been in place since 1977, in coordination with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. To protect groundwater resources, federal and state governments require state-of-the-art landfill liner systems. The design of the liner system limits the potential for offsite odor and prevents leachate from infiltrating to the groundwater through the base of the landfill.

The Coffin Butte liner system, approved and regulated by the ODEQ, includes five key components (listed below from bottom to top.)

- 1 A layer of sand, gravel or geosynthetic material, to prevent groundwater from impinging on the liner
- 2 A geomembrane of high-density polyethylene that serves as a barrier between groundwater and the upper layers of the liner system
- 3 A second layer of sand or gravel to provide for detection and secondary containment of possible leaks
- 4 Two or more additional flexible geomembrane liners to contain leachate and fluids produced within the landfill
- 5 An advanced leachate collection and removal system

Regulations require all system components and design to be approved by Oregon DEQ. Further, construction and monitoring of these systems is done in conjunction with ODEQ under a quality assurance and control plan.

MYTH

The expansion will lead to increased odors at the landfill.

Methane leakage from the Landfill will increase under the expansion and further contribute to climate change.

FACT

The CUP is a regulatory step that allows Coffin Butte to continue its daily operations on a different site within the existing property. It does not equate to more waste, more tonnage or increased odors. **The “working face” of the landfill – the area where waste is actively being disposed – is currently less than an acre and would remain the same size with the CUP.**

Coffin Butte utilizes a wide variety of highly engineered systems to limit the potential for offsite odor, including gas collection, leachate treatment, daily cover and groundwater monitoring.

Since 2019, Coffin Butte has invested \$3.75 million to enhance and upgrade its landfill gas collection system, including installation of 36 new vertical wells and 15,600 feet of horizontal gas collection piping. **Coffin Butte is investing an additional \$1 million in its gas collection infrastructure in 2022, including construction of 12 additional vertical wells and 3,600 feet of horizontal gas collection piping.**

Methane is produced by decomposing waste and organic material. The U.S. EPA, under President Joe Biden’s U.S. Methane Emissions Reduction Plan, sets tighter rules for landfills to capture and control their emissions. **Coffin Butte Landfill already meets or exceeds these federal requirements through two best-in-class initiatives.**

The first is the Coffin Butte Landfill Gas Generation Project, which began in 1995. **Coffin Butte’s 335 gas wells capture methane and convert it to electricity, providing 5.66 megawatts of power. That’s enough to provide electricity to around 4,000 homes.**

In addition, Coffin Butte processes 140,000 tons of organic material each year from Benton and surrounding counties at its Pacific Region Compost site. **In 2010, the PRC became the first Oregon compost facility to be approved for Type 3 organics composting, including proteins, dairy and food waste.** Food waste is the largest category of material sent to landfills, and one of the biggest contributors to landfill methane gas emissions, according to the EPA. But at Coffin Butte, this material is instead converted into a nutrient rich compost used for area agriculture, landscaping and gardening.

