

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Landfill charge is short-sighted

I was quite displeased to read that, with the support of the Benton County Board of Commissioners, the minimum tipping fee at Coffin Butte Landfill would rise from \$28.75 to \$85.75.

Why would we want to “discourage the general public from bringing their trash to the landfill”? Would we rather it be strewn along the roadside or deposited in the woods or along (or in) the creeks and rivers? Is this where we want our law enforcement resources redirected? Sorting through trash to identify offenders?

As a forest landowner in Benton County, I don’t want to discourage people from taking their trash to the landfill. I’ve seen the alternative in too many instances. Will the county or Republic Services pay for the cost of cleaning up trash dumped on rural lands?

I agree that Coffin Butte has an issue with excess traffic and wait times at the scales. But discouraging use by local residents is just not a good solution. Perhaps providing a transfer station as is provided in nearby counties (even located at or near the landfill)? If it’s cost-effective in other counties, then why not in Benton County? Or provide a separate scale and dumping area at Coffin Butte for small loads? Or if they don’t want to invest in another scale, charge by the size of the load rather than the weight?

We bear the burden of hosting the regional landfill in our county. Why should we be penalized with higher costs of using the landfill?

Karen Fleck Harding
Philomath (Dec. 10)

Dumping rates will trash county

I understand that garbage dumping rates for small consumers are proposed to increase a large amount. I have a fair idea of the result.

I have lived in a county that had expensive rates and limited ca-

capacity. Every ditch and ravine will become a garbage dump. When it is too expensive to get rid of trash the right way, it finds a wrong way. It will not be recycled or reused to a degree that overcomes the amount of illegal dumping. Our ephemeral waterways and ditches will become clogged with trash, effecting flow and quality in the rivers. Clean up will take a huge effort in the long run.

The county needs to make an effort toward solving the issues of safety at Coffin Butte by changing traffic patterns, providing a second scale, creating special dumping times for the public, creating a transfer station, or other creative solutions. It also sounds as if the county needs to locate a dump for the future. Higher fees don’t address that underlying problem.

Paying Republic Services more to reduce use of the dump is not the answer. An increase of \$60 per 25 small user trips per day is \$375,000 over the course of the year – for providing less service. And our shared landscape will be trashed.

Kate McGee
Philomath (Dec. 11)

Landfill requires county oversight

Benton County citizens bear the burden of having a regional landfill, which they did not ask for and which has increased traffic congestion, road deterioration, odor, noise, and groundwater contamination risk, without any offsetting benefit.

A proposed threefold rate increase will penalize the many local citizens who haul small debris loads to the landfill, and free the operator to focus on commercial traffic.

An ongoing headache of rural landowners has been illegal dumping of trash, as some seek to avoid the current dump fee. The proposed fee increase will incentivize increased illegal dumping. Who’s going to clean up these dumps up?

Commissioner Xan Augerot wants landfill pricing to redirect waste to other places, although she neglects to mention where, the added cost, or other consequences. Since the waste will obviously end up in the landfill, it’s just a matter of how convoluted (and expensive) the intermediate handling steps will be to get it there. Experience has shown that processes with more intermediate steps will not be more cost-effective than citizen self-hauling.

Not long ago, the landfill eliminated Sunday operation, thus adding to the issue of scale wait time. If the landfill wants to reduce scale wait time, it could encourage public use on weekends, build a second scale, or provide offsite transfer stations.

To date, the county seems to have primarily listened to the Republic Services storyline, rather than thoroughly considering community impacts. It is the county’s responsibility to manage (i.e., minimize) the landfill’s impact on Benton County citizens.

Greg Peterson
Corvallis (Dec. 10)

Letters

LETTERS should be original and no longer than 250 words. Letters must include the author’s name, a street address, and a daytime telephone number.

Most letters are published unless they are obscene, libelous, copied from Web sites or attack other writers personally. All letters are subject to editing.

Delays in publication of letters usually indicate a backlog. Other issues generally are brought to the writer’s attention for remedy.

Writers are limited to two published letters a month.

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