



MARK YLEN, MID-VALLEY MEDIA (FILE, 2014)

Residential customers offload waste at the Coffin Butte Landfill in May of 2014. Operator Republic Services wants to reduce the number of loads brought in by small-scale haulers like these but decided to reduce a planned price increase following a public outcry against the size of the rate hike.

Price hike scaled back

Landfill operator plans a more modest rate increase at Coffin Butte

BENNETT HALL
 Corvallis Gazette-Times

Republic Services is rolling back a hefty price increase for dumping household waste at the Coffin Butte Landfill, saying the new rates were made public before they were finalized.

"Signs were put up prematurely at the landfill, before we had an internal discussion about it," said Julie Jackson, the waste-handling company's municipal manager for the mid-valley.

The new rates, which were also posted on the company's website, would have tripled the minimum charge to drop off a load of household rubbish at the landfill north of Corvallis from \$28.75 to \$85.75 beginning Jan. 1. At the same time, the maximum allowable size of a "minimum"

load was set to increase from 500 pounds to 2,000 pounds.

News of the price hike sparked an outcry from Benton County residents who thought the increase was excessive.

"We went back to the drawing board on the landfill rate," Jackson said on Friday. "In an effort to keep the price as minimal as possible, we re-evaluated what we could do on the minimum, and as of Jan. 1 the minimum fee at the landfill will be a flat \$40."

In other words, residents are looking at an \$11.25 price increase rather than a \$57 jump.

The higher minimum rate is intended to discourage private individuals from bringing their trash to the dump, for two main reasons: safety and efficiency.

Coffin Butte is a regional facility that currently accepts waste from 11 counties, taking in about 2,000 tons each day. That makes it a very busy place, averaging around 340 vehicle trips on a daily basis.

But there's only one set of

scales to weigh vehicles on their way in and out of the dump. The scales are used to calculate dumping fees. That can create a bottleneck for Republic Services, which, in addition to operating the landfill, is the main waste-hauling company in the mid-valley. When Republic's garbage trucks have to queue up behind private vehicles, Jackson said, that can make trash collection less efficient and drive up costs.

In addition, company officials say, the dump can be a dangerous place for private citizens who need to get out of their vehicles to offload trash.

By resetting the minimum rate at \$40, Jackson said, the company hopes to ease those safety and efficiency concerns without making the cost too prohibitive for people who really need to make an occasional run to the dump.

"We think that it's a lot more palatable for folks, but it still reinforces those same things

we were saying before," Jackson said. "We want to reduce those small loads coming into Coffin Butte if possible, we want to keep people safe on the landfill and we want to reduce congestion."

Republic officials are also hoping the price increase will discourage people from taking potentially recyclable materials to the dump and will make them take a closer look at other ways to dispose of household waste that's too big to cram into a standard 35-gallon garbage cart.

For instance, the company will pick up a mattress or box spring for \$35.16 or other furniture items for \$36.29. The cost to haul off an appliance is \$35.16, or \$45.34 if it contains Freon. Customers can also request extra-large garbage carts or order up a dumpster to handle large-scale cleanup jobs.

"There are still many, many options people can use to have their waste picked up that will

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