

AS I SEE IT

Editorial coverage hits new low

The Dec. 19 editorial coverage of recent landfill expansion happenings hit a new low.

Throughout the hearing process of Republic Services' permit application, the GT, in various articles, has backed this multibillion-dollar enterprise. The most recent comments continued this trend of partiality by totally misrepresenting facts.



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The writer began by stating that the large number of people who testified included "many of whom didn't address the criteria." In fact, the majority of people testifying were members

of a large neighborhood group called Valley Neighbors for Environmental Quality and Safety, which formed in opposition to the expansion and whose members were well aware of the criteria needed to be satisfied by the applicant.

Members are very concerned about the serious impact that granting of this permit would have upon road safety, emergency evacuation and groundwater, the threat to nests of herons and other birds, and the threat to indigenous historical sites, not to mention the noise, air and visual pollution that building a 270-foot-high mountain of trash twice the size of the current landfill would create.

All of these impacts would "seriously interfere with the use of the adjacent property, character of the area or purpose of the same," Benton County Ordinance 53.215 Section 1.

If the writer had taken the time to listen to all of the oral testimony at the Benton County Solid Waste Advisory Council and Corvallis Planning Commission hearings, or to read the submitted written testimony to these bodies, he or she would have heard this reference, along with others, repeated many times.

In addition, the writer of the editorial stated that the Planning Commission "took a politically expedient path where they listened to the people." Yes, they did listen to the people, and that's exactly what they were elected to do.

He or she goes on to state that Republic will provide "nearly irrefutable evidence" that will demonstrate that the noise increase will be "negligible" and no greater than a guy with a leaf blower or traffic on Highway 99. Obviously this person has not been around at 5:30 in the morning to hear the blaring of back-up horns that can be heard 2 miles away, or the banging of truck tailgates or occasional pile-driving.

Many of the neighbors who are members of VNEQS are experts in their fields of hydrology, wetland ecology, noise pollution, air quality and local history, among other fields, and they have substantiated their

concerns in their testimony with verifiable data ... unlike Republic.

In addition, the Adair Rural Fire Protection District has opposed the permit for its failure to adequately address closing of an emergency evacuation route. The Audubon Society of Corvallis also testified against the permit.

For some reason, the writer failed to mention that, if granted, the permit will allow Republic to do away with the current cap of allowed trash collected annually and collect as much trash as it could contract for anywhere in the state. As it is now, Coffin Butte collects 88% of its garbage from 21 other counties and Washington State.

Lastly, the editorial writer's claims that the expansion will "jack up garbage and recycling bills" are not supported by evidence. Yamhill County's landfill was recently mothballed and the rates actually decreased when a different collector took over.

The free press has a duty to accurately produce and impartially state the facts. The GT has failed in that duty in its coverage of the proposed landfill expansion.

Grant Carlin of Corvallis is a retired teacher and businessman. He is a board member for several local nonprofit agencies. He is a resident closely impacted by the proposed landfill expansion, and is one of the original organizers of VNEQS.