BC DEMS RESOLUTION 2026-06
A RESOLUTION URGING PEOPLE & PLANET CENTERED RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE, BY THE JOINT TASK FORCE ON MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

WHEREAS, in Resolution 2024-03[1] (passed Nov 21, 2024), the Central Committee of the Benton County Democrats (BC Dems) endorsed the denial of any request to expand Benton County's existing landfill (Coffin Butte) or to establish any new landfill within the County, in order to protect the Earth's climate; and

WHEREAS, both the Linn-Benton Pacific Green Party and Benton County Republican Party passed similar resolutions urging the denial of any expansion request of the existing landfill, and any new landfill in Benton County, demonstrating strong cross-party consensus on the issue; and

WHEREAS, the Waste Infrastructure Partnership Act[2] (WIPA), proposed by Rep. Sarah Finger McDonald in the Joint Task Force on Municipal Solid Waste in the Willamette Valley (Task Force)[3], offers a promising framework for this region to begin transitioning away from reliance on 20th century landfill practices and technologies; and

WHEREAS, the BC Dems value the time, thought, and energy invested by the Task Force, and recognize a shared vision for addressing both Coffin Butte and landfills in general; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2026, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued a formal Enforcement Notice[4] to the owner/operator of Coffin Butte, Valley Landfills, Inc., for Class I violations that included: failure to conduct proper monitoring for leaks, failure to take corrective actions when leaks were detected, failure to operate landfill gas collection systems correctly, failure to maintain the landfill cover, and failure to submit accurate reports; and

WHEREAS, these Class I violations generated a record-breaking $3-million fine because "the violations addressed in the Notice pose a risk of harm to human health and the environment"; and

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[1] https://bentondemocrats.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Res-2024-03-small.jpg

[2] WIPA Benefits Infographic:
https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025I1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/316665
WIPA FAQ:
https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025I1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/316666
How WIPA Work Infographic:
https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025I1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/316667
WIPA Policy Proposal:
https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025I1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/316668
With or Without WIPA Timeline:
https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025I1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/316669

[3] https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025I1/Committees/JTFMSW/Overview

[4] https://www.oregon.gov/deq/nr/202603valley.pdf

WHEREAS, the annual 42-50 inches of rain at Coffin Butte produces 40-45 million gallons of toxic PFAS- and chemical-laden leachate each year[5] – and millions more will continue to be produced annually for decades after the landfill cells are closed – which cannot currently be properly treated, is not regulated by the DEQ, threatens wildlife, and ends up in the drinking water and agricultural products of Oregonians; and

WHEREAS, there are currently ~1.05 million tons of waste coming to Coffin Butte annually from around the state[6], exacerbating pollution and underscoring the need for incentives to reduce landfill waste volume; and

WHEREAS, this region's landfill waste volumes could be significantly reduced by adapting pre-transport organic and waste-stream source separation practices such as those in Germany, which has achieved an overall waste recovery rate of 82% and a municipal waste recovery rate of 98%[7], and South Korea, which is diverting 96.8% of its food waste[8]; and

WHEREAS, it is vital to include environmental and public health impacts and analyses establishing actual costs to ratepayers in WIPA, and make those analyses transparent to the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Committee of the Benton County Democrats, in order to protect the environment and public health, urges the Task Force to include the following recommendations to the Legislature and Governor, which will be submitted in December, 2026:

1. Require that the WIPA, or any other funding mechanism or legislation, gives priority to projects that transition to solutions that lead to a sustainable future and away from landfills, especially organic and waste-stream separation efforts that divert resource materials prior to transport.

2. Require that the WIPA, or any other funding mechanism or legislation, explicitly rules out the use of public funds or bonding authority to underwrite the obligations of private companies under existing franchise agreements.

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[5] https://cd.bentoncountyor.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2025-Coffin-Butte-Landfill-Annual-Environmental-Monitoring-Report-Part-1.pdf (pgs. 12; 292)

[6] https://cd.bentoncountyor.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/2024-Coffin-Butte-Landfill-Annual-Report-with-QA-Appendix.pdf (pg. 40)

[7] https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Environment/Waste-Management/Tables/liste-brief-overview-waste-balance.html#59626

[8] https://www.franvia.com/2026/06/korean-trash-recycling-system-guide.html

BC Dems
Benton County Oregon

3. Require public oversight of how WIPA funds, or those of any other related funding mechanism, are used, and that participating companies be required to make their existing franchise agreements available, via a central information clearinghouse maintained as part of this program.

4. Require the closure of the Coffin Butte Landfill and a move to systems for integrated waste management and material recovery.

5. Recommend that any new legislation must provide an accurate analysis of the actual cost difference to rate payers and assessments of externalized costs, including environmental and public health impacts.

6. Recommend including independent expert evaluation of emerging contaminants and their impacts on the environment and public health, and a publicly-available central clearinghouse for data on environmental impacts of existing solid waste facilities.

7. Recommend that any legislation for the funding of projects include environmental and public health risk assessments, both for any existing facilities that are proposed to be leveraged and any new infrastructure built with the support of public funding.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY: THE BENTON COUNTY DEMOCRATS PLATFORM AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE,

APPROVED BY THE BENTON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE OCTOBER 15, 2026

Taryn Bazurto

1st Vice Chair Taryn Bazurto

15th October, 2026

Date