



May 20, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Rules
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for House Bill 3971, Relating to solid waste disposal in the Willamette Valley

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazen and Pham, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the more than 55,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club Oregon, we write in support of House Bill 3971, which requires counties to approve a land use application in order to develop a mixed-waste facility.

By enacting HB 3971, Oregon will continue to lead the nation in identifying solutions to the growing problem of managing municipal solid waste. Presently, landfills in Oregon are filling up and expanding despite the need for more environmentally friendly ways of dealing with “waste.” This bill supports needed actions; considering waste a resource, diverting materials from landfills, and reducing landfill contribution to climate-disrupting methane gas production.

Waste as a Resource

This bill facilitates the construction of a mixed-waste facility in Lane County and helps encourage Oregonians to move away from a throw-away culture. The need for landfills is a result of a “linear economy” that uses resources and then disposes of them in ways that pollute and harm our environments. Landfills, caused by overconsumption and the rapid discardment of goods, present significant environmental, economic, and social problems within our state. It leads to resource depletion, waste overload, and increased pollution - impacting ecosystems and our public health.

Instead of accepting a throw-away ethic, Oregon needs a “circular economy” that manages waste as a resource. This supports needed actions such as diversion of materials from landfills and reducing landfill contributions to climate-disrupting methane gas production. CleanLane will do this by taking food waste and recyclables out of the garbage **before** it goes to the landfill. It will ensure materials that can be reused **never** make it to the landfill. This **prevention** of “waste” through identifying it as a resource, is an important first step in moving toward a circular economy.

Recycling Modernization and Environmental Impact

To deal with the issues that landfills present, in 2015, the Oregon State Legislature passed [Senate Bill \(SB\) 263](#), updating the Opportunity to Recycle Act.¹ The implementation of this act and its recovery

¹Oregon’s Recycling Laws
<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/pages/oregon's-recycling-laws.aspx#:~:text=In%20June%202015%2C%20the%20Oregon,1%2C%202018%2C%20per%20rule>

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requirements go into effect July 2025. As part of this process, Lane County was required to provide a materials recovery goal to be achieved for 2025 and beyond. Recovery goals are used to encourage waste reduction, recycling, and diversion of waste from landfills. Lane County selected 63% recovery rate for its voluntary goal. CleanLane is Lane County's visionary solution to this requirement and to Willamette Valley's regional waste crisis. It will divert an estimated **80,000 tons** of trash annually from the landfill. This increases Lane County's overall waste diversion rate, helping it meet the state-mandated 63% diversion target.

The CleanLane facility will also extend landfill life. By reducing the volume of material going into Short Mountain, the project will extend the landfill's lifespan to **more than 90 years**, avoiding the need for a new landfill in the long term future. This will serve Lane County and be a role model for other counties and states revealing other waste management options besides taking resources, using them and discarding them as waste.

Reducing Methane & Climate Disruption

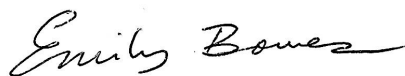
Methane from landfills is a known climate-disrupting problem—it is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in a 20-year period. It is critical that we cut back on methane, and landfills are key because 90% of the methane emissions produced by Oregon industries come from our largest landfills.² Currently in the state legislature is [SB 726 A](#), requiring landfills to monitor methane with drone-assisted technology. A mixed-use facility will help counties proactively mitigate the methane problem.

The proposed CleanLane facility will divert methane-producing **organic waste** before reaching the landfill. This organic waste will be disposed of using anaerobic digestion, producing **renewable biogas**, which will capture an estimated **90% of the methane**. Therefore, HB 3972 will also support Lane County in dealing with its landfill's methane emissions goals.

With a mixed waste facility, Lane County will have a truly climate-friendly solution that treats waste as a resource, addresses methane emissions and landfill capacity—all which are significant issues for other landfills. Therefore, we urge you to support House Bill 3971.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Bowes, Policy Strategist



² Pulling Back The Curtain On Hidden Landfill Methane Emissions
<https://www.beyondtoxics.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Oregons-Secret-Climate-Killers-Feb-2025-Beyond-Toxics.pdf>