

Department of Ecology
Air Quality Program
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Attention Bill Flagg,

RE: Chapter 173-408 WAC – Landfill Methane Emissions Comments

My name is Nancy Lust and I represent Friends of Rocky Top, a project of CascadiaNow.org. Friends of Rocky Top is a group of neighbors and citizens concerned with protecting the land, air and water around the Rocky Top area, west of Yakima and site of the DTG Recycle limited purpose landfill (LPL), MRF, gravel mine and PCS remediation facility. Since DTG took over operations at this landfill in 2019, it has become a MTCA cleanup site emitting noxious gasses, whose cleanup is complicated by the presence of a landfill fire, resulting in the suspension of the air operating and landfill permits since July 1, 2023.

At the other limited purpose landfill near Yakima, the Caton landfill, they have also had a landfill fire, are involved in a lawsuit with Yakima County over the County's attempts to get Caton to comply with their permit, and they too lost their landfill permit on July 1, 2023 (but they continue to operate while appealing). There are a group of neighbors near the Caton landfill concerned about a possible cancer cluster.

1. Include Limited Purpose Landfills in this Landfill Methane Rule

I share this information to illustrate some of the problems associated with limited purpose landfills (LPLs) in Yakima County and to urge you to include them in this proposed methane rule. LPLs accept wood waste, which is biodegradable and will generate methane. One look at the debris piles at an LPL and you will also see a lot of cardboard and other materials that closely resemble MSW. Without clear guidelines for regulators and construction crews regarding the 2-bin rule where construction and demolition debris is supposed to be separated into recyclable and non-recyclable materials, much of the material coming into the DTG landfill resembles MSW. This MSW is a likely source of methane production.

In Washington state it is my understanding that residuals from Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), whose job it is to separate out the recyclable materials, are sometimes classified as MSW. Those residuals, at least in Yakima, often went into the DTG landfill, not to an MSW landfill. This irregularity in the C&D waste regulations results in LPLs that accept large amounts of waste that is MSW, is biodegradable and

will generate methane. Although the amount of methane from a limited purpose landfill operating *in accordance with its permit*, should be less than what you would see coming from an MSW landfill, methane is still going to be present at LPLs, and it will most likely be present in larger concentrations at LPLs that do not comply fully with their permits. Because methane is such a potent greenhouse gas, it is important to identify even small methane leaks and do the mitigation to reduce those emissions. I encourage you to revise your rule and include a provision that would apply to LPLs.

2. Allow for methane detection using drones or other technology that proves effective

This rule is clearly based on a similar methane regulation developed by the California Air Resources Board and CalRecycle and adopted in 2010. It is 2023, and technology has changed, prompting California to investigate ways of updating and improving their regulation of methane from landfills. In May 2023, CARB held a workshop where they expressed openness to using drone or satellite technology. See slide 11 from the [workshop](#) below.

Next Generation Emissions Monitoring Technology

Leverage advances in emissions monitoring technologies to quickly pinpoint large methane sources and mitigate leaks

- Currently, mitigation is required for any methane exceedance detected via ground emissions monitoring following the U.S. EPA Test Method 21 leak detection procedure
 - Staff is considering requiring ground monitoring and mitigation when an operators is notified that a leak has been detected using technologies such as satellites
- The current regulation only allows new monitoring procedures to be approved on a case-by-case basis through an Alternative Compliance Option request
 - Staff is considering a potential process to evaluate and approve the use of new technologies such as drones to supplement surface emissions monitoring

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It will aid in the implementation of the rule to have provisions written into the rule that allow for changes in measuring methane based upon advances in technology.

3. Friends of RockyTop fully supports the comments made by Luke Lemond, from Washington Ecology, and comments made by Zero Waste and Suellen Mele. These were thoughtful, well-researched comments designed to hold landfills accountable and reduce methane emissions.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this new rule.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lust
Friends of Rocky Top, Chair
A CascadiaNow.org project