

Submitter: Ryan Shepard

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB2528

Hello House CEE Committee,

I am voicing measured, but ultimately neutral support, for this bill.

Gas-powered lawn and landscaping equipment contributes both to noise and air pollution. 5% of our nation's air pollution comes from landscaping equipment, and this figure is higher in urban areas. The air quality of my city, Portland, is getting worse with greater urbanization and a more severe fire season. The need for air quality improvements is great, both in Portland and throughout Oregon.

At the same time, I am very concerned about the environmental impacts of lithium-ion batteries, which I'm assuming this bill would promote as the replacement for gas-powered equipment. The entire resource lifespan of lithium batteries, from lithium mining to the eventual discard of spent batteries, degrades the environment. As far as I'm aware, the State of Oregon has no plan or policy in place to address these impacts. The sole domestic source of lithium occurs in Silver Peak, Nevada, less than 10 miles south of the Oregon border. The Lithium Americas project, now undergoing approval by the Federal government, would create a 41-year open-pit mine near indigenous land in Thacker Pass, NV. The EIR for the project predicts that the groundwater would be contaminated for approx. 300 years. Many of the local indigenous Shoshone and Paiute people are against this mine. The immense water needs of the project (3,244 gallons per minute) will likely cause a 12-foot drop in groundwater, a concerning impact given that climate change and drought are already straining regional water supplies. The primary shareholder of Lithium Americas is a Chinese firm, creating a foreign-bound stream of wealth for this project that impacts domestic communities.

Only 10 miles north of Thacker Pass, Oregon's side of the McDermitt Caldera could yield one of the largest supplies of lithium in the US, with likely many of the same environmental impacts caused by its extraction. I expect that the private sector will likely soon propose development of this source.

For this reason, I regretfully cannot give my full support to this, or any other bill, that would contribute to the proliferation of lithium battery technology until the State addresses this technology's lifespan environmental impacts. I would happily support this legislation, if the CEE Committee and the House would include, either in this bill or a standalone bill, such provisions as: a: (1) study and implementation plan for addressing the lifespan impacts of lithium batteries, (2) State requirements and

guidance for public or private lithium extractors to adopt Community Benefits Agreements with local communities potentially impacted by lithium mining, and (3) pricing and revenue structures to ensure that part of the revenue from lithium extraction stays in the hands of those whose lands supply the lithium.

Oregon greatly needs to reduce its greenhouse gas contributions to climate change and improve its air quality. But Oregon should not do so by simply replicating the same environmentally-destructive industrial resource extraction that led us down the path of fossil fuel dependence in the first place. We can and should do better. Part of climate action is climate justice, and that means doing right by local communities and the environment that we treasure as Oregonians.

Thank you for your attention,  
Ryan Shepard