

February 15, 2025

Oregon State Legislators,

I am testifying in support of Representative Travis Nelson's proposed House Bill 2738, which would fully ban the use of leaded gasoline fuel at the Portland International Raceway (PIR). I live one mile from PIR and am alarmed by this public health hazard.

Although the racetrack operates on Portland Public parks land, the city has done nothing to protect North Portland from the harms of leaded fuel. The Kenton community has expressed our concerns for many years and are appreciative the Oregon State Legislature in responding to this public health hazard.

Lead is an extraordinarily dangerous substance. When a child inhales lead it passes from their blood into their organs, including their brains, where it can cause a permanent loss of IQ and other neurological problems. Most of that lead eventually will be stored in the child's bones and can continue to cause health problems over a lifetime – even affecting an unborn child during pregnancy. According to the Oregon Health Authority, recent research shows that “no safe level of lead exposure exists.” Children growing up near a racetrack and exposed to the amount of lead emitted each year from PIR can experience as much as a 10% decline in performance on standardized tests by the third grade. Even a single year's exposure can reduce their school performance by several percentage points. The damage declines over distance, but effects can be measured as much as 25 miles away.

The people of North Portland have been fighting for almost a decade for the publicly owned racetrack to ban leaded fuel. The health impacts of leaded gasoline on people, particularly children and the elderly, is well known and thoroughly documented. There have been extensive studies on the impact of leaded gasoline at racetracks specifically and the detriment to health in surrounding areas. Professor Vivek Shandas, the founder Urban Places Research Lab and a member of the Portland State University faculty, described lead exposure at Portland International Raceway as “one of the more serious concerns that would affect the environmental health of Portlanders”.

Please note that the sport of auto racing does not require leaded fuel to be successful. **NASCAR banned leaded fuel in 2007**. If the iconic racetrack, Daytona Beach can operate with unleaded fuel, so can Portland.

We ask all of Oregon State Representatives to support the bill and vote to approve resolution HB 2738 to protect our community's health and wellbeing.

Linda M Wysong  
Portland, Oregon