

Submitter: Matthew McCormack
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2738

Here we go again. As a third-generation Portsmouth resident and St. Johns business owner, as long as I can remember, newly arriving residents have complained about the noise of PIR. The founders of PIR included North Portland residents Big Jim Anderson, Bill Ireland, and Jim Miller, who started the Shirley Ann ambulance brigade, at the time the only ambulance service in North Portland. Since 1961, PIR has gotten racers off the streets, from Kelly Point Park road and other North Portland locals, and on to the track, and provided an outlet for numerous community events. PIR has already been forced to give up 1/4 mile drag racing, and is reduced to the 1/8 mile. We complained little about this change. A North Portland tradition would be lost, if PIR is lost. Removing leaded fuels from the PIR program would bankrupt the track. These same forces already took away the Portland Speedway (and the North Portland drive-in). We cannot afford to lose one of the last vestiges of old North Portland.

There is no evidence to suggest that the use of leaded fuels at PIR has had any impact whatsoever (other than the neighborhood complainants), to the residents of North Portland. A study conducted by the city itself in 2017 found that airborne lead levels outside the track boundaries showed no elevation at all during track events using leaded fuel. Levels at the track itself were well below OSHA guidelines. There are other, much more substantial, sources of airborne lead contamination in North Portland - namely the Portland Airport. Small planes are required to use leaded fuel, and burn thousands of gallons above the area daily. The amount of leaded fuel used at PIR is a tiny drop in the bucket comparatively. The forces attacking PIR over leaded fuel usage have created a straw man argument to leverage a scary concept instead of speaking to their true complaints about sound, which was there when they chose to move to North Portland.

I have supported Travis Nelson in the past, and I appreciate all the hard work he has done in the State Legislature to pursue progressive wins for North Portland. This effort is, however, misguided.