

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

HB 2738

Some context here may be helpful - I am a registered Democrat and strong supporter of the progressive wing of the party both locally and nationally. And I am a strong supporter of health, climate and environmental initiatives, both personally and professionally.

Some additional context - this bill is a red herring. Rep. Nelson and a small vocal minority of Kenton residents want the track shut down. But since the city of Portland has no intention to do so, they are fighting a two-pronged battle - against noise (which is lower than it ever has been and continues to decline), and leaded fuel (which is used at a very small number of events by a very small number of participants). So you may be asking, if it's only a small number of users, how will it harm the track to cut those people out? The reason is that the subset of users we are addressing are some of the most dedicated members of our community. Big events (NASCAR, Indy, etc.) are the primary benefactors of the track - they generate revenue (for the track and for the city at large), bring in non-Portlanders to see that the city isn't actually a post-industrial hellscape, and broadcast our city and its beauty to a global audience (and you can't even put a value on that in terms of the benefit to our reputation). But those big events rely on hundreds of volunteers, without whom the events don't happen. So if you lose the core members of the community, you lose the community; then you lose the volunteers, and you lose the big events.

Portland International Raceway is a city park. Owned by the city, overseen by the city, and controlled by the city. Why should the state legislature substitute its judgment for that of the city leaders and administrators? (And sure, this is a statewide measure, but crafted so that it only applies, and only ever will apply, to PIR; funny how that worked out). The city has looked into this, with the assistance of DEQ, and found no issue. Kenton is a gentrified/ying neighborhood - how much airborne lead is generated from all of the commercial and residential renovation and demolition work taking place? Or the airport? Like I said, lead is a red herring - this measure is supported by people who bought increasingly expensive houses near a racetrack and now want to enhance their own property values by shutting down a facility that was founded before they were born.

PIR brings people together, from all parts of the state, the region, and the country, not to mention those watching on television. It enhances the city's coffers and those

of local businesses. And it plays a leading role in demonstrating what Portland is to the rest of the country, including red states. Why is shutting it down in the city's/state's interest?

I'm a big believer in science, and in the value of fact-based evidence in aid of the policymaking process. If the medical community says that vaccines are safe, I'm in. If the climate science community overwhelmingly says that we need to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, I take it as gospel. And if any environmental or scientific study showed that the small amount of leaded fuel used at PIR events had a measurable negative impact on the cognitive abilities of kids in Kenton, I'd be out with torches and pitchforks. But no such study exists, and in fact the only study commissioned on the topic demonstrated no such impact. If the legislature decides to allocate funds to another such study, I'm all for it. And if that study conclusively shows the negative impacts the bill's proponents claim, then leaded fuel should be banned. But to regulate the facility out of existence based purely on vibes (and with the ulterior motive of shuttering the track) is not how policy is supposed to be made.