



Kate Brown, Governor

Sept. 2, 2022

Kenton Neighborhood Association,

Thank you for meeting with us on Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022 to discuss your concerns and questions around lead emissions from Portland International Raceway. This memo is to summarize the information the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Health Authority shared during that meeting.

DEQ's regulatory authority

DEQ regulates point source emissions, like industrial facilities, and is responsible for meeting the [national ambient air quality standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#). DEQ does not regulate PIR, because it is not a point source. The agency also does not regulate the cars through its vehicle inspection program, because they are not permitted to drive on regular roads due to their use of leaded fuel.

In January 1996, the Clean Air Act banned the sale of the small amount of leaded fuel that was still available in some parts of the country for use in on-road vehicles. At that time, EPA said fuel containing lead may continue to be sold for off-road uses, including aircraft, racing cars, farm equipment and marine engines. DEQ may become involved in matters when certain activities are impacting the state's ability to meet the national ambient air quality standards. However, DEQ's air modeling, the air monitoring done at PIR by G2 Consultants, and DEQ's ambient air quality monitors all indicate that PIR is not having an impact on the ability to meet these standards in north Portland.

DEQ air quality modeling at PIR

DEQ used the data available on PIR's website about the amount of leaded fuel sold at events to model potential impacts to the community. DEQ made protective assumptions that would purposefully over-estimate risk to ensure it would not underestimate the risk. These assumptions include that all leaded gas sold was used that day and that all the fuel had the highest lead concentration according to the Safety Data Sheets from the fuel manufacturers.

Using an approved model commonly used to estimate the dispersal and transport of pollution, DEQ modeled emissions going around the track, since the data available and the races being modeled were full track races. DEQ specifically focused on the days when the consultants did air monitoring, because these were days with the highest leaded fuel use. This allowed DEQ to compare its modeling to the monitoring data collected at the same time.

The results of this modeling showed that levels of lead reaching the community were below levels that would be expected to harm health, using the hazard index as a metric. [Read more about how DEQ and OHA use the hazard index in the Cleaner Air Oregon program.](#)

Gaps in PIR data

In the process of developing this model, DEQ did identify gaps in the data PIR collects about leaded fuel. These gaps include:

- How much leaded fuel racers bring in;
- How much leaded fuel racers use;
- How much leaded fuel vendors sell, or racers bring in or use during drag or motorcycle races; and
- Monitoring data during drag or motorcycle races.

This information would provide more certainty around PIR emissions. Additional monitoring collecting during drag and motorcycle racing, would be helpful to understand if impacts are different when racers are revving their engines at the beginning of the drag strip.

Community health and lead emissions

Oregon Health Authority participated in DEQ's analysis to understand the impacts of the lead emissions. They concurred with the process of modeling the emissions and that levels of lead emissions modeled did not pose immediate health risks to residential areas around the track.

However, there is no safe level of lead exposure, especially for young children. Parents who are concerned about their children's exposure to lead can ask their healthcare provider for a standard medical test that measures the amount of lead in blood. The results of that test can tell providers and parents whether levels are higher than what is typical for children in the United States and whether public health intervention or medical treatment is needed. The results of that test cannot determine the source of any lead measured in the blood. OHA and Multnomah County Health Department track cases of blood leads that are higher than typical in the U.S. population. There have not been any cases of elevated blood leads in children in Portland attributable to PIR.

Lead is present in communities from previous industrial and common uses, such as leaded gasoline in regular cars and in paint. DEQ and Multnomah County Public Health have resource for communities to use to protect themselves:

- [Multnomah County Health Department Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.](#) Information, resources and referrals for individuals and families on the topic of lead poisoning prevention. Bilingual (Spanish). Leadline.org or 503-988-4000
- [Oregon Childhood Lead Prevention Program.](#) Information about ways individuals and families can reduce their overall lead exposure. www.healthoregon.org/lead
- [Healthy urban gardening advice.](#) All [urban soils likely contain some lead](#). This webpage includes information about ways to garden safely that minimizes exposure to lead. It also provides information about how to get your soil tested and how to interpret results. www.healthoregon.org/gardening