

February 19, 2025

Lawmakers,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB2738.

As a family actively involved in drag racing at Portland International Raceway (PIR), I am deeply concerned about the significant negative impact this bill would have on PIR and the racing community. This bill threatens to eliminate an integral recreational sport that has been enjoyed by generations of families.

The environmental concerns outlined in this bill are misleading. Drag racing at PIR consumes minimal fuel. The cars participating in 1/8-mile races use very little fuel, with some crossing the finish line in as little as eight seconds. Contrary to misconceptions, cars are not idling all day in the pits or staging lanes. Our daughter began drag racing at the age of six, and her junior dragster, which runs on race fuel, consumed less than five gallons of fuel in an entire summer of racing. Furthermore, despite spending four months a year at the track, she excels academically, performing well above average in her studies. This directly contradicts claims that exposure to PIR poses cognitive or developmental risks to children.

During the recent hearing, the number of nearby schools was mentioned, but a crucial detail was omitted—prime racing season occurs between June and August, during school recess. Generations of racers, including individuals now in their 70s and 80s, have been racing since their youth and remain in good health, further challenging the claims made against PIR.

Beyond environmental concerns, passing this bill would devastate the tight-knit racing community, impacting both adults and children who are deeply passionate about the sport. PIR predates most of the surrounding neighborhoods, and those who chose to move nearby did so with full knowledge of its existence. PIR and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have continuously implemented improvements, and there is no evidence to suggest that leaded fuel has suddenly become an issue. If residents find the noise or seasonal influx of visitors disruptive, the onus is on them to relocate, not on PIR to cease operations.

I urge proponents of this bill to visit PIR this summer, particularly during junior drag racing events, to witness firsthand the enthusiasm of young racers and the minimal fuel consumption involved. The push for HB2738 appears to stem from a coordinated effort by a group of residents opposed to PIR's presence rather than genuine environmental or health concerns. PIR existed long before many surrounding homes, businesses, and schools were developed, and those entities knowingly established themselves in proximity to the raceway.

In the broader context of North Portland, far greater risks to public health and safety exist, including fentanyl access, human trafficking, homelessness, and industrial pollution. Lawmakers should prioritize addressing these pressing concerns rather than targeting a beloved racing facility with no verifiable record of harm.

I urge you to base your decision on factual DEQ data rather than personal grievances. Please oppose HB2738 and preserve an institution that has brought joy and community engagement to countless families for generations.