

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

I came down to testify in person but there wasn't enough time to get to everyone in the room. Here is what I would have said.

Good morning Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba & Levy and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Matthew Denton, and I'm the treasurer of the Portsmouth Neighborhood Association and I've lived in North Portland for 20 years.

One of the things I like to do in my free time is to blow glass. The way you make colored glass is to take various chemicals and mix them with clear glass. Some of those chemicals are very simple, the color of beer bottles is made by adding iron to glass. However, some of those chemicals are highly toxic, to get certain shades of yellow and orange you mix in cadmium. One of the ways to make white glass is to use arsenic. And about 10 years ago there was a study of moss in the Portland area that discovered a high concentration of cadmium and arsenic in SE Portland. The source was a local glass supplier known as Bullseye Glass.

All the arguments that we are hearing today about how banning lead at the racetrack will hurt the economy or that certain things will be outlawed and will never come back... Those arguments happened a decade ago in the glassblowing community. And it wasn't just Bullseye that was affected, other glassblowing places in Portland knew if more regulations happened at Bullseye, it would happen for them too. But ultimately we also knew that we couldn't give other people in the community cancer, so something had to be done. Bullseye stopped making certain colors immediately, and over time installed various expensive pollution controls to make sure they didn't have this issue again. And 10 years later the glass blowing community in Portland is still around, still doing great, and the people living near Bullseye aren't being exposed to toxic chemicals anymore. So I know that communities like this can change because I've seen it happen. Banning leaded gasoline from the racetrack will not be the end of racing in Portland.

And there is one other parallel to the glassblowing story: the same study of moss a decade ago that identified the cadmium in SE Portland, identified a lead issue in North Portland right next to the racetrack. We know the lead from the gasoline is ending up in the neighborhood and causing development issues for children.