

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

This is an update to my prior written testimony.

Please vote to reject HB2738.

As a Portland native and longtime bicyclist, engineer and research scientist I am always concerned about our environment. However, the stated support for a ban is a newspaper article and its attempts at post hoc correlation based on research papers authored by economists and not scientific or medical professionals. The papers' "quasi-experimental evidence" does not include measurements of lead in the air or blood. They are attempting to correlate the opposite effects (improving health and test scores) with an assumed decrease in blood lead levels which is in turn assumed to be in response to the elimination of lead from a subset of track activities. Neither of the tracks referenced in the papers have a leaded fuel ban, and both continue to run events with leaded race fuel.

Testing for airborne lead at PIR yielded undetectable levels in all except locations directly adjacent to the racing surface during worst case events, and the highest of those levels are still less than 2% of the OSHA limits (1).

As one would expect given these values, no elevated blood lead levels have been detected in the subject areas (2).

Actual testing has been done to correlate blood lead levels with exposure to far higher lead usage in piston-engine aircraft, finding "a small but statistically significant effect" (3).

Passing this bill would very likely result in the closure of PIR after 60+ years of operation, during which it has provided a safe and regulated environment for citizens (and voters) to practice a wide variety of hobbies. PIR has already had unprecedented noise restrictions added long after the facility began operation, but it is clear that some groups will not be satisfied until it is completely shut down. Many areas where race tracks have closed have struggled with increased illegal street racing (4).

Regards,
Michael Pliska, BS-Mechanical Engineering, MBA, MS-Physics

References:

1. https://portlandraceway.com/file/143/10159-38_PPR_PIR_Lead_Assessment_Report_100517.pdf
2. 09/02/2022 Letter from Oregon DEQ & OHA to Kenton Neighborhood Association
3. <https://doaj.org/article/5de1efebf9ee43b08ae59b3e880247a2>
4. <https://www.sltrib.com/amplify-utah/2023/03/16/laws-change-street-racing-salt/>