

Submitter: Mary-Margaret Wheeler-Weber
On Behalf Of: myself
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2738

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba & Levy, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of House Bill 2738 on my own behalf.

While a local study definitively linking PIR's use of leaded gas to specific health and developmental outcomes in North Portland may be lacking, the overwhelming scientific consensus is clear: there is no safe level of lead exposure. The DEQ/OHA memo to the Kenton Neighborhood Association underscores this.

Lead is being released into the ground and air at PIR, and there are multiple exposure pathways for nearby residents. While other lead sources exist in the world, we shouldn't tolerate one source simply because others exist. We should work on what we can when we can to reduce the overall amount of pollution.

The DEQ/OHA memo also says information was lacking in some areas. We could ask for more studies. However, at some point we must weigh risks and benefits and take action. Opponents of this bill seem to feel there is a low risk of lead exposure and a high risk to PIR's business model and their preferred form of entertainment. I ask that you consider where they are writing from: Many are not PIR's literal neighbors. It's easier to decide entertainment is more important when your own family isn't at risk.

PIR has said two things: That it uses leaded gasoline minimally and it is phasing it out on its own. And, on the other hand, that PIR cannot function without using lead and will close because it's not financially feasible to stay open without it. If a public library was thriving and didn't require tax support because it had a profitable side-hustle selling crack, we wouldn't tolerate it. We would work together to support them to find alternative sources of support for their good projects. This bill gives PIR a path forward into a future they say they are heading towards anyway. It provides time to do outreach to the community to develop alternative sources of income and become something that all its neighbors can support and celebrate, including motorsports.

I have lived on the North Portland peninsula for over 40 years and grew up in St. Johns. I come from a working class family and I love my community and all my neighbors, including my neighbors who love PIR. Let's make PIR better together for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration and public service.