

Testimony In Favor Of HB 2613 (Instant Racing At Portland Meadows)

Thank you chair Beyer and members of the committee.

My name is Al Peterson. My address is 1195 Janus Street, Springfield, Oregon, 97477. I've owned racehorses and have been attending races at Portland Meadows since about 1974. I'm also a broadcaster and in that capacity have done a little bit of work with The Stronach Group. But it was just a couple of hours a week last summer and really doesn't have much bearing on what I'm saying today.

I am speaking in support of Instant Racing at Portland Meadows. Largely because the Stronach Group has invested so much in Oregon racing I think they deserve this opportunity.

This company saved horse racing in Oregon back in 2001.

We were just about done. The track was losing money, it was rundown, needed a ton of maintenance. And making things more difficult the EPA was requiring major work to protect groundwater and the Columbia River.

The EPA was asking for the right thing---it needed to be done.- But the track was already in the hole and in order for a new operator to take over they were going to have to dig the hole 600 thousand dollars deeper. I just didn't think anybody would do it.

But the Stronach people did. I have no idea how much they spent on maintenance and upgrades and infrastructure but it had to be millions. And they never stopped.

Every time they've had the choice to do the right thing, the cheap thing, or nothing---they've always done the right thing.

Last year they decided to try summer racing for the first time ever. The cheap way would've been to change some work schedules, hang some potted plants, and open the doors and wait. Instead they did major remodeling, tons of advertising, even brought in a satellite truck and a full crew to broadcast live television every Wednesday night. And it worked. I have never seen so many young faces at Portland Meadows.

They've done everything in their power to turn things around and they want to do more but this time they need your approval.

Please let them try Instant Racing. No one expects it to be the entire answer but it might be a piece of the puzzle.

These aren't slot machines. They are games of skill. They are geared toward people who already understand the sport or those who want to learn about it. And if this company wants to try it---I just think we should let 'em.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and I'd be happy to answer any questions...