

Submitter: Thomas Busse

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB630

This bill is a crony giveaway. The bill essentially raids the state's lottery fund to hand out \$15 Million over to a developer to clean the soil of a former landfill so it can be converted to housing - and I have a feeling there is a specific landfill the bill's author has in mind - which really should be spelled out in the bill's analysis.

The way to fund such land reclamation is to bond the landfill site itself against future property taxes when the site is redeveloped. Moreover, the owner/operator of a closed landfill is getting subsidized by this bill when in reality the users of the landfill should pay for the site remediation, which can be accomplished through garbage bill surcharges (and credits when the site is sold). In the Oregon Metro Area, taxpayers are already shilling out billions for "affordable housing" bonds that do not seem to be making housing more affordable. Because nobody lives on the landfill site, such a local bond could be passed by authorizing a community development district. Alternatively, the State of Oregon could charter a public bank under the State Treasurer (similar to the Bank of North Dakota) with a window guidance policy for issuing low-cost financing for such projects.

Oregon does need to build housing, and reclaiming urban landfill sites is good public policy, but the state is using the lottery as a piggy bank for politicians to reward their friends. If the legislature really wanted to help the taxpayer, one potential use of the state lottery would be to arts funding, which is proven to improve economies via tourism and business generation. A common objection to public funding for the arts is taxpayers shouldn't be forced to support art they disagree with. The lottery is a voluntary fund. Such a repurposing would allow the City of Portland to repeal its hated Arts tax.