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Local organizations plead for moratorium on new gas stations being built in Eugene

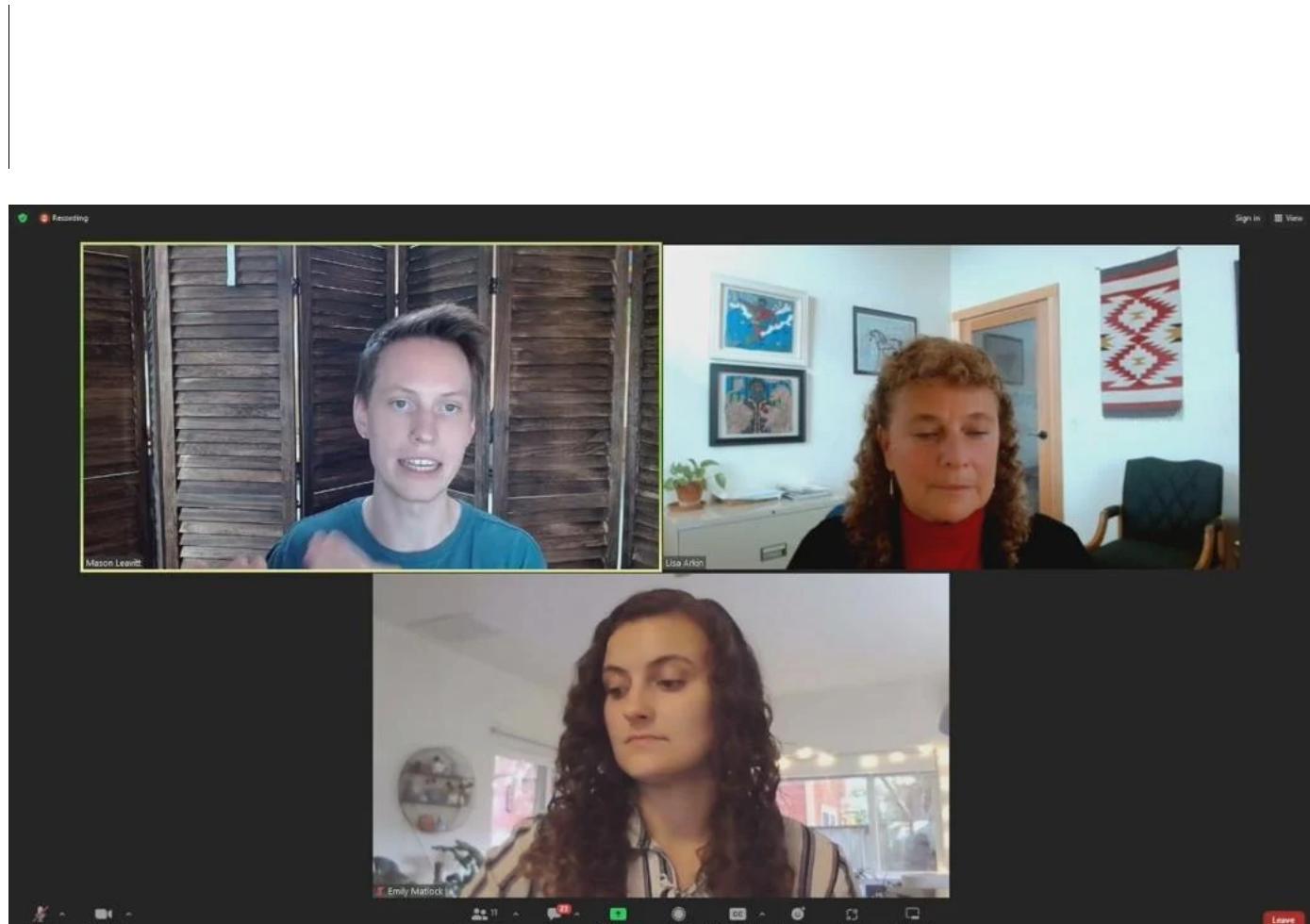
By: Noah Chavez
Oct 17, 2023

Local organization wants City of Eugene to cancel proposed gas station sites because of health concerns.

EUGENE, Ore.-- A local environmental non-profit is urging the City of Eugene to enact a moratorium on new gas station locations around the city. The organization Beyond Toxics claims gas stations create hazardous chemicals that spill out into the air and the soil over time.

Members of Beyond Toxics are pleading to city officials to cancel any future gas station projects in the area. Beyond Toxics' official Mason Leavitt said the health risks that come with gas station should lead to less locations across the city.

"We should not be building gas stations within 500 feet of homes where science has repeatedly demonstrated higher concentrations of benzene that lead an increased risk of childhood cancer," Leavitt said.



The organizations web conference revealed their findings and research associated with gas station hazards.

Leavitt said that gas stations whether in use or abandoned will continue to release hazardous chemicals into the air and the ground. Thus leading to health risks to the young and the elderly.

"The primary one is Benzene but in the report we also talk about Toluene, Ethyl Benzene and Xylene," Leavitt said. "Benzene is a known Carcinogen and we know it causes cancer and we know it causes blood cancer."



Beyond Toxics claim that gas stations in Eugene will omit hazardous chemicals both into the air and the land it occupies.

Leavitt said a person's lungs, heart, and immune system can be dangerously impacted by these airborne chemicals. That's why the group is hoping the city of Eugene will put a halt on building new gas stations and focus more on increasing services for electric vehicles. Lisa Arkin with Beyond Toxic's said they want to see a moratorium be put in place.

"A moratorium would be a really smart and moderate step the city could take while it looks at its zoning codes," Arkin said. "And figures out how to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels and encourage other modes of transportation."

KEZI 9 News reached out to the Eugene City Council but has not received a comment.

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Noah Chavez joined the KEZI 9 News team in January 2023 as a news reporter. If you have any story ideas for Noah, you can email him at noahchavez@kezi.com.

Noah Chavez