

I am a riverfront homeowner in Wilsonville (31385 SW Olympic Drive) for the past 16 years and a lifelong Oregonian. Not only do I live on the river, I grew up doing watersports on this stretch of river with my parents. It's been over 40 years that I have been able to enjoy the river as a kid and now a family man, but now it's being proposed to take this freedom away from me!?!?

My family boats, swims, fishes, paddleboards, you name it, every summer on the river. It has become our backyard so to speak, however, **as a riverfront owner, I don't treat the river like it is mine to control.**

This stretch of river is the only stretch of water in the entire metropolitan area that watersports activities can be done on reasonably smooth and safe water now that the Holgate Channel is closed downtown. The rest of the Willamette River is either too shallow, narrow, windy or crowded with large boat traffic to support safe recreation. The Columbia is too swift, rough and dangerous. This fact alone is why there has been an increase over time in the number of river users – just like we have more traffic on our roads.

Now, if the purpose of these bills is to avoid undo wear and tear on docks, then you are being woefully misinformed.

*We have a 16 year-old dock that my family uses between March and November every year, and we maintain it for such usage. During the busiest times (those 3-6 hot summer weekends we get a year), yes, our dock does rock some in the waves, but that's what we expect with a floating dock on a river. Just like with our house and car, we do the normal maintenance required to keep it ready and safe for use. Over these past 16 years, that hasn't been much other than a little powerwashing! Being down enjoying the water, sun and seeing everyone else doing the same is the appeal to living where we do. We love the lifestyle.*

If the purpose of these bills is to protect property and dock value, then again you are being woefully misinformed.

*The restriction on boat usage and the activities specifically being targeted are going to devalue my home and property. We have two boats and lots of watersport gear that will lose its value if there is no place to use it anymore. You have to have a buyer for something to hold value, and who wants to buy when there is no place to use it. In addition to my family personally, the whole communities of Wilsonville, Newberg, Canby and West Linn stand to see a large hit as well from the decline of summertime enthusiasts that spend money in local business. Lastly, there are a great many businesses that will essentially be forced out of business if they aren't able to sell boats, sell equipment, provide moorage, sell gas or provide lessons. The economic impact is millions in losses for everyone vs. the cost of normal riverfront maintenance for homeowners. It doesn't make financial sense.*

If the purpose of these bills is for safety concerns, then the misinformation to you continues.

*By taking away the only useable water for watersport enthusiasts, you will be forcing people onto two of the smallest and/or narrowest stretches of river – up river from Newberg to the Yamhill River confluence (extremely narrow) and between the Oregon City Falls and Rock Island in West Linn (very very short). There already is about as much traffic on these stretches of river that can safely be supported. If you force more people into those areas, that would be a huge safety concern. This isn't something new either, as you will get this same information from the Clackamas and Yamhill County river patrols. These Bills will just create a safety nightmare.*

Lastly, if the purposes of these bills is to control erosion, this is yet another false concern being voiced.

*For 40 years I have watched the river change, a tree fall, a slide happen. That is part of the normal life cycle of a swift moving body of water that fluctuates in height as much as 30 feet between low water and high. If you were actually to come out yourself and see where it is that most of the falling trees and slides occur, you will find that it typically is only where the houses are. Why? Because of their own irrigation of yards and downspouts that just run into soil where the homeowners have cleared their erosion control vegetation for their view. This is not a boating problem, but rather a runoff problem created by the homeowners themselves.*

In reality, what this is all about is a push for some of the homeowners to find a way to reduce the boat traffic on “their” river – putting themselves ahead of the rest of Oregon!

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