

Hello Representative:

We are writing in opposition to HB 4099 and HB 4138, which would prevent boaters from wakesurfing along a 20-mile stretch of the Willamette River. This is a very controversial issue that addresses state jurisdiction, homeowner concerns and the right of boaters to use public waters. We are asking you to please vote to delay further consideration of these bills until 2019, when there is time for the legislature to thoroughly debate the significant impact of a ban on access, and the merit of expanding the powers of the state Marine Board.

Our company manufactures wake board boats that are sold by Oregon dealers. These are expensive boats and we believe this ban would reduce the number of boats sold by local dealers. Reduced sales of boats and accessories will directly impact the economic success of these businesses and threaten the jobs they provide in the community.

HB 4099 not only bans wake surfing, but goes so far as to require ballasted boats, and only ballasted boats, to go at no-wake speed throughout this 20-mile section of the river. HB 4138 gives the Marine Board new responsibilities regarding shore erosion that it has no prior experience assessing.

To our knowledge, there has not been a study to determine the impact of wake surfing on these shorelines, whether a ban provides significant benefit, and if there are differences within the 20-mile stretch of river.

These bills deserve close scrutiny and a robust debate by the legislature and stakeholders. It has been our experience that when all stakeholders are given the opportunity to meet, the result can be options that ensure that the rights of all involved are respected and addressed. However, this is the first time this bill has come before the legislature. There is little time during the short session for this kind of cooperative effort. The longer 2019 session is better suited to address such controversial bills.

Please vote against HB 4099 and HB 4138 and provide an opportunity for the Marine Board to work with all stakeholders to develop consensus solutions.

Sincerely,

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