

I am a riverfront homeowner in Wilsonville – 31385 SW Olympic Drive.

I do not understand why the Legislature is even involved with this now that the Marine Board has already reopened rule making for the entire state regarding the issue of wakes and safe distances for operation, and it should be given an opportunity to do their job (one that the boaters pay for directly). Bill HB4099 only addresses the Willamette River so it targets “us” as riverfront homeowners and the only “useable” waterway in the metropolitan area for watersports. There is no other place to recreate on smooth water since the Holgate Channel downtown has been closed to watersports. The Columbia is too rough, other stretches of the Willamette have commercial traffic, are consistently too windy in the summer and are just too dangerous because of width and depth.

In the amended language of HB4099, the makeup of the taskforce to review and submit recommendations doesn't make any sense. 10 members (5 from the House and 5 from the Senate). The House will appoint one of its members, one shoreline property owner, one environmental organization member, one watersports industry member and one boat owner. The Senate will do the same except appoint one of its own members. When this all affects us as riverfront homeowners probably more than anyone from an economic standpoint, why are there only going to be two of us on the taskforce with no guarantee that you appoint 1 from each side of the argument.

The committee was presented statistics we as homeowners whole heartedly refute as garbage. The survey of riverfront homeowners presented by the proponents of this bill did not include very many homeowners since no one opposed was included in it. There are many many more riverfront homeowners opposed to any kind of boating restrictions as evidenced in the Wilsonville Council meeting. How come none of us were surveyed? There should be no stock given in any survey results unless you actually survey all of us. Likewise, the statistics on boating accidents that were given by proponents also are garbage. In no way are the injury statistics based upon the type of boating or activity that was being done nor are they specific to our stretch of the river. There have been no fatalities on this stretch of river in the 16 years I have lived on it. In talking with law enforcement friends and those working the river, tubing, by far, is the most dangerous activity done behind a boat.

Lastly, “we” all stand to lose by any kind of boat usage ban on this stretch of river. We as homeowners will see the value in our homes and property decline if you take away one of the prime reasons people want to live here. Our local businesses will lose out on tourism dollars, gas sales, food sales, etc. Many of the boat dealers and watersports gear shops will go out of business. The marinas won't be able to rent their boat slips. This will have a huge economic impact on everyone in this area.

In summary, the river is more crowded now just like our roads. You can't compare the river 20 years ago to today regardless of WED's. There are more people just cruising around doing nothing on a crowded weekend than there are surfers or wakeboarders.

Darren Holsey

Darren & Lisa

