

Written testimony for the House Transportation Policy Committee in Support of
HB 4138 and HB 4099

February 10, 2018

Sent via email to htp.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing these comments and submitting them in advance of the hearing on these bills this coming Monday in case I am unable to make the trip to Salem. I have a son to get to school in Portland and a farm to run in Newberg so getting to Salem may be difficult. But I want to be sure you understand this does not mean I am not serious about or committed to my support of the bills before you for consideration, HB 4133 and HB 4099. I am concerned that the wake boat industry has the resources and personnel to make it appear that its voice in the matter of these bills is dominant. I want to be sure that my voice as an individual landowner and citizen of this state is heard as well.

My name is a Maria Hall. I own a farm near Newberg which has one half mile of Willamette River frontage. The farm has been in our family since 1959. Our river frontage is located within the zone which does not allow wake enhancing devices (WED's) in an area known as the Newberg Pool. Sometime in the 60's my father had a boathouse constructed which further connected us to the river. Growing up, we used to waterski in the Newberg pool and we currently keep a runabout in the boathouse during the summer, so we are motorboat users who understand recreational aspects of the river. We also use water from the river to irrigate our filbert orchard.

We have obviously seen a lot of change on the river since the 60's. There are many more river users. However the most remarkable change has been the design of the boats and the wakes they produce. The effects of these wakes has affected our use and enjoyment of the river in many respects. It is difficult to balance or be comfortable while on the boathouse decking when the big wakes pass. I am very worried about bring my elderly parents or younger children to the river on weekends as they would lose their balance. It is not comfortable to sit on the decking as the wakes cause extreme heaving. The wear and tear on the boathouse is heavier than it used to be. We have to go through extraordinary measures to secure our boat to keep it from bashing into the boathouse interior. We find it nearly impossible to get the boat in and out of the boathouse when the wakes are present, which is pretty much a constant all weekend long during the summer. It is difficult to waterski or even comfortably cruise along our stretch of the river because of the huge wakes. We find that it almost isn't worth going out on the boat during summer weekends. I have witnessed confrontations between wake boats and canoeists basically getting

swamped by the wakes. Unfortunately many of the operators of these wake boats seem to have little respect for others. The newer designs of the wake boats have made the language in the present WED zone regulation out of date. Now, wake boats are manufactured to generate huge waves as an integral part of their design- no “devices” needed.

In addition, and more to the point of HB 4138, I believe from my observations that waves from the wake boats have impacted the river banks as the large, high energy waves cut into the soft sedimentary banks. The vegetation along the banks is giving way, along with the soil in the banks. The river becomes brown with silt during the times that the wake boats are present. I was concerned enough to contact the Yamhill County Soil Conservation Service and the Oregon DEQ. No one was willing to investigate. It is vital that some agency, hopefully in this case State Lands, takes an interest in preserving soil and maintaining water quality. This is a matter of concern for not only me as a landowner, but for all citizens of their state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Maria Hall