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Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger
Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources
State Capital
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Subject: Support for HB 2351

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Gorsek & Sprenger, Committee Members:

I have lived on the Willamette River for more than 16 years. I am an avid boater and water skier, and our family regularly wakeboards on the Willamette. I am also concerned about the long-term viability and environmental sensitivity of the precious resource that is the Willamette River.

I am in support of HB 2351.

We have experienced significant erosion along our embankment, particularly over the past 5 years since wake boat manufacturers have been producing larger and heavier boats, capable of producing larger and larger wakes. The Willamette River, given its narrow width and environmentally sensitive shoreline and habitat, is not equipped to handle the volume and size of these wakes. To this point, the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) has been unwilling to consider the possible environmental consequences of boat wakes in their rulemaking.

The Willamette River Greenway (State Land Use Goal 15) provides for the oversight and coordination of State agencies, counties, cities and other jurisdictions. One of the critical policy gaps that we have identified is that the OSMB is not included in that umbrella. HB 2351 would address this policy gap and bring the OSMB into this group.

Thank you for your consideration and ask for your support for this bill.

Michael S. Farrell