

In support of HB2352

Dear Chair Witt and Committee Members,

I heartily support HB2352 and feel that it is an important step in protecting the Willamette River.

I've lived on the Willamette since 1987 and love the opportunities it provides to recreate. I also appreciate the habitat that makes fishing and birdwatching possible. It is truly an awesome place.

Sadly, I've also lived on the Willamette long enough to see dramatic changes over the last 15 years or so. Prior to that time, boats used for watersports were MUCH smaller. There were also fewer people in the area. About 15 years ago, the rate of bank erosion started accelerating in response to wakeboarding. Then, about 10 years ago, the Oregon State Marine Board enacted new rules to limit wake enhancement devices on some parts of the Willamette. Unfortunately, the rules have not been well understood, nor have they been enforced. This, despite OSMB efforts at education.

More recently, wake surfing has become quite popular. 23 foot and larger boats with 350-550 horsepower are capable of making much larger wakes. It is now impossible to enjoy the river when they are out. The wake boats have become the bully in the playground, claiming the river for their activities and displacing the other users. The waves they generate are simply too large for other craft and for the safety of other users. It is time for a better system. I feel that HB2352 will provide the education needed so that operators will not be able to feign ignorance.

Note that the issue of damage caused by wake boats is well documented around the world. There are studies in multiple countries as well as in multiple states here in the US. The boat industry is investing heavily in lobbying and rushes to jump on any attempt to regulate their use, even in sensitive areas like the Willamette.

Please make every effort to get this legislation enacted. The river needs your help!

Eric Lintner