

From: [Lydia Smith](#)
To: [Exhibits HNR](#)
Subject: In Support of HB 2351 and HB 2352
Date: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 1:56:08 PM

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To Whom it May Concern,

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the hearing tomorrow and hope this letter will help inform our law makers on the devastating impact wake boats have on those of us who live and recreate on the Willamette River. I think it is vital that laws be put in place to protect the greenway (HB2351) and that the OSMB (HB2152) be empowered to educate users of the Willamette so that no one gets hurt and that both the environment and private property be protected from wake damage. I have attached a video that shows an example of what happens with even small wake action.

I have lived a floating home at the Portland Rowing Club for the last 10 years and used to love swimming, kayaking and boating on the Willamette as well.

What happens on the river every summer day is like having a huge semi truck barreling down a residential street at 60 miles per hour. Picture a street (with no sidewalks!) where children are playing, mothers are pushing strollers, teenagers are biking and this huge truck races by leaving everyone running for cover. Add insult to injury in that this driver is legally allowed to drink alcohol while driving and has only had to take a short, very basic test. A truck driver would see the chaos he creates as he drives by, but a wake boat driver is oblivious as much of the damage he causes happens up to a minute or two after he has left the scene. Clearly, this would never be allowed on land - large powerful vehicles are restricted to freeways and larger streets rather than being allowed to go wherever they want and at whatever speed they want with total impunity (given the lack of enforcement - any rule about speed or distance from shore or property is regularly ignored).

The environment on the river has changed dramatically, for the worse, in the last couple of years. Before wake boats, we all lived quite harmoniously on the river - with the majority respecting each other. With the advent of wake boats it has all changed. Despite installing a huge sign on our clubhouse that says "Big WAKES DAMAGE our homes" the wake boats seem to love to go by our moorage oblivious to the chaos and damage they incur. Sometimes I go on my deck and wave at them and point at the sign. Then, on occasion they decide to go by again but further away. Unfortunately this doesn't always help as sometimes the waves pick up steam as they travel.

The waves the wake boats generate are extremely damaging. Last year I spent thousands of dollars putting in steel beams to stabilize my swim float, but it did not work and the pins pulled out. Since that time, I've been desperately trying to figure out a way to stop the damage caused from these huge waves. I installed a big piece of wood on my main float so that the swim float couldn't pop up and land on the main float and recently a wave was so big, it ripped the board out of my deck and hit a column that holds up my roof. It was hit so hard, it moved it several inches and is now cantilevered out over my deck.

Additionally, in the summer I have friends over with children who like to play on a big green

floaty. I have to be extremely vigilant as when a wake boat passes, I have to make sure the floaty and kids are no where near the deck as they could easily be thrown under my deck or hit their heads on the deck when the waves come in. It is very dangerous.

In addition to the damage that the waves do to my home, our hillside is slowly being eroded by these big waves as well.

My understanding is that Lake Oswego has outlawed these boats because of the environmental and home/dock damage they cause but they are free to speed by on the Willamette costing thousands of dollars of damage in their wake. It is just a matter of time before a real catastrophe happens - be that a roof falling in or a person getting seriously injured because of these wake boats.

As a whitewater kayaker myself, it looks very fun to surf these waves and I would love to try it sometime (somewhere safe that is) . I empathize with these boaters desire to enjoy themselves on our public rivers, but does it have to be at the cost of everyone else - the kayakers, stand up paddlers, floating home owners, sailors, swimmers, fishermen, dragon boaters, the environment etc? I strongly urge you to outlaw these boats from populated areas of the Willamette where there are so many people, homes and fragile ecosystem. Perhaps they could be limited to sections of the river that have concrete walls and no floating homes? Or perhaps limited to man made reservoirs where no environmental damage would incur? Unfortunately imposing more rules about distance etc would not work as there doesn't seem to be the resources to enforce these rules not to mention that even when these wake boats go slowly and are far away, they still can cause damage.

I have attached a video that shows some of the damage that has occurred thanks to big waves. Unfortunately, I am unable to shoot video when these waves occur because when they are happening, I need to hold onto my umbrellas on my deck so they don't fall into the river or make sure any guests I have over aren't in the water or near the edge where they could get hurt.

Thank you for your consideration and I truly hope you will help the thousands of people that are adversely impacted by these boats and not be swayed by the lawyers and lobbyists employed by the boat industry who caters to the very wealthy (these boats cost hundreds of thousands of dollars). It is quite discouraging how our political system often seems to favor companies that can afford to hire expensive lobbyists. Hopefully Oregon will show itself to be more concerned with protecting the environment and with safety and well-being of its constituents rather than bowing to those interests with the deepest pockets.

Sincerely,

Lydia B. Smith

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