

Watts Remy

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To: Exhibits HNR
Subject: In Support of SB47

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Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Darby Collins, President of the Willamette Greenway Coalition. We are a coalition of property owners, environmental and recreational users and organizations who support public policies which protect and enhance public use of the Willamette Greenway along the Willamette River from Cottage Grove to Kelly Point at the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers.

The Willamette Greenway Coalition supports Senate Bill 47, the establishment of a waterway access permit as an important step forward to encourage human powered recreation on the Willamette River, providing better access and accountability for recreational users and recognition by the Oregon State Marine Board of non-motorized boating on Oregon waters.

Because OSMB is funded through annual motorized vessel registration fees, the agency's focus and policy emphasis is on providing access for and support of the motorized boating. We believe that this has caused the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) to be out of balance and favor motorized boats at the expense of non motorized boating.

By providing this non-motorized fee and the associated Waterway Access Fund defined by Section 2 of the bill, this legislation re-balances the mission and policy emphasis of the Oregon State Marine Board to better serve the paddling community and the ecologically appropriate use of fragile Willamette River riparian lands.

Here are a few specific provisions we like about this bill:

- Providing visible vessel registration numbers, consistent with this non-motorized vessel fee, will improve on the water enforcement, safety and boater accountability.
- The requirement in Section 5 which requires the permit to be carried while on the water is innovative and helps this new permit from becoming a cost-barrier to enjoying Oregon's waterways. The transferability of this waterway access permit between human-powered vessels, so that it applies to the vessel being used at the moment, helps in that many Oregonians have multiple kayak, canoes, rafts and other craft. It would be prohibitively expensive for each of these vessels to be permitted annually.
- Section 4 (c) provides that the fund can be used to provide access to underserved communities removes cost barriers to non-motorized boating for low income Oregonians.
- Providing resources for increased boater education in Section 4 (3) (a) pays for important safety education and to help human powered boaters better understand rules to avoid conflicts in increasing congested waterways.

Although SB 47 is a positive step forward, there are other public policy enhancements we would like to see enacted in addition to SB 47 as introduced:

- There needs to be a commitment of additional resources for Sheriff's Marine Patrol to provide a safer marine environment for non-motorized boating in Oregon.
- The Oregon State Marine Board needs to act consistently with the interests of all Oregonians who enjoy and live along our waterways, not just motorized boats who currently pay fees.
- We strongly endorse the addition of human-powered boater Members to the Oregon State Marine Board to balance the membership of the current Board which appears to be a 'booster' for motorized boating to the exclusion of non-motorized boating.

- Oregonians who are concerned about the damage motorized boating currently causes to fragile riparian areas and public and privately owned riverside property should be represented on the Oregon State Marine Board by the appointment of riparian property owners who are concerned about livability issue on Oregon's increasing busy waterways.

SB 47 will help the Oregon State Marine board rebalance their mission. We urge the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to refer SB 47 to the Senate with a Do Pass Recommendation.

Darby Collins

President

Willamette Greenway Coalition