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To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senator Alan Olsen, Co-Chair
Committee Members
By email

Subject: Increased wakes: damage and danger to river users, HB 2351A

I am writing to you to request your support for HB 2351A currently before the Oregon State Senate. HB 2351A gives the Oregon State Marine Board the local rulemaking authority to make regulations which align with other state agencies to protect the shoreline, marine habitat, and private property along the Willamette River Greenway. It will close a policy gap that allows a small class of river user to cause damage to whole sections of the river and imperil thousands of other users.

Businesses, Houses and utilities

Over the last 2 years large wakes have increased enormously. Now large wakes happen many times a day and throw whole marinas around like a child's toy.

Code required connections are over stressed and have failed. Utility connections fail, leaving houses and businesses without water, a danger of gas and sewage leaks. People stagger or fall to the floor to avoid injury. It is far worse than a sever earthquake.

Shoreline and type of damaging wakes

Not only are our houses affected but the shoreline behind the houses and beyond our boat docks. Wakes are not one simple wave emanating from the centerline of the boat. They 'bounce' off the opposite shore and return across river. They meet their counterpart wave and the turmoil is doubled or trebled. The shorelines are being eroded and marine habitat destroyed.

When the damage occurs

In the season, during the week this damage occurs from about 3-4pm till sundown, every day. At the weekend it is worse and starts about 2pm (some earlier) until sundown or later. At these times there is a constant pounding of houses against water, and the pilings that secure our homes and businesses.

Other users and timing

There used to be water skiers who produced smaller wakes but now there is a procession of boats, which produce huge wakes. Other users have experienced life-threatening accidents, nobody wants a worse incident. We need a solution soon before something catastrophic happens.

Conclusion

I am grateful for your appreciation and understanding of our concerns. I am sure that suitable, safe, wakeboarding locations can be found locally. Thousands of Willamette users will be grateful and the couple of hundred wake boarders will be able to enjoy the river in the knowledge they will not be harming anything or endangering others. I trust that you will feel able to support the bill.

Yours

Richard Lakeman