

Watts Remy

From: Lydia Smith <lydiabsmith@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 1, 2019 10:33 AM
To: SENR Exhibits
Subject: Wakeboats - severe damage and danger to river users, HB 2351A

To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senator Alan Olsen, Co-Chair
Committee Members

I am writing to you to request your support for HB 2351A currently before the Oregon State Senate. HB2351A 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 users to cause damage to whole sections of the river and imperil thousands of other users.

I hope this letter will help you understand the devastating impact wake boats have on those of us who live and play on the river.

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.

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 by 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. I have attached a video that shows this. Unfortunately, I am unable to shoot video when these big waves occur because it is too dangerous when they are happening

In addition to the damage that the waves do to floating homes, the banks of the river are 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. Many recreational paddlers have capsized due to their wakes.

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, rowers, floating homeowners, 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.

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 boating industry. Many of these wake boats cost upwards of \$300,000 so their industry is spending an inordinate amount of money to further their cause, but is it fair to put the pleasure of a few above the safety of hundreds?

Sincerely,

Lydia B. Smith

Lydia B. Smith
Producer/Director

Walking the Camino

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