

Chairman DeWitt and member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Greg Smith and I am a resident of West Linn, Oregon. I've lived a hundred yards from the Willamette River next to the Newberg Pool for the past 28 years. I'm speaking with you today because of my concerns about the growing use of wakeboard boats on the river and their impact on shoreline erosion, wildlife habitat, and public safety.

Last summer saw a noticeable increase in wakeboarding in Willamette Park, just to the west of my home. The effect of this increase was especially evident from a nearby viewing platform constructed by a local Eagle Scout three summers ago. A number of times during the past summer I watched sizable waves formed by wake boats hit the shoreline before dissipating, releasing silt into the water and undercutting the bank. The undercutting beneath the platform was so bad this year, the city had no choice but to remove it entirely in early February. The land where the platform once stood had remained the same since I chased an independent-minded Jack Russell terrier there with some regularity in the early 2000s. The only thing that has changed over the past almost twenty years is the size of boats and their waves. On February 28, I walked down to this site with a geologist from Portland State, Matt Brunengo, who concurred with my sense that the area had been subject to dramatically more erosion recently, erosion that was the likely result of wave energy caused by wake boats.

I can understand the attractions of wakeboarding and don't want to stop folks from enjoying this activity with their family and friends, but it seems inappropriate on a waterway as narrow as the Willamette where waves of this size would never occur naturally. There are several appropriate waterways close to the Portland Metro area such as Hagg Lake, the Detroit Reservoir and the Columbia River with greater widths and depths where the waves from wake boats won't affect the shoreline.

I strongly urge to you pass HB 2555 (also HB 2725) and help make the Newberg Pool a place where all Oregonians can recreate sustainably for many generations to come.