

Dear Members of the Committee

I am providing this written submission in strong opposition to HB 2555 and HB 2725.

I am a 40 year Oregon resident born and raised who enjoys the summer months with my friends and family on the river experiencing the great outdoors we have in this state. HB 2555 and HB 2725 will crush that experience for my family, friends, and so many others.

My initial reaction to the merits of the bill are that there is no supporting information to justify such a strong bill which removes a huge number of families from the river. The bill itself notes that after removing boats over 4000#'s there is a potential to look at raising that weight limit. The bill itself is backwards by the very fact that they want to remove boats then decide if there is evidence to support the ban or change it.

In addition to the lack of transparency or supporting evidence provided in the bill there are 2 specific evidentiary items I want to address.

1. Dock owners – You have already imposed restriction on waterways to limit wakes by the wealthy landowners along the River. This bill would be another step in making the river more elitist at the detriment to the average boater. It is unjust to allow only the richest people to enjoy the wonders that the Willamette River has to offer. This bill would cater to the wealthy dock owners and ignore most of the population that lives in this area
2. Erosion – The bill incorrectly implies that boats in particular are responsible for erosion on the water. The bill doesn't provide any clear information to comment on, so I will provide some general comments from my years on the river.
 - a. The water level in the rivers changes drastically over the winter in the Newberg area which floods fields, crosses roads, transports massive logs down the river piling up on boat docks/ramps, etc. Anyone who has spent time on the River knows the River changes during the winter and the first few outings in the spring deliver surprises. Rock bars shift and form new islands, previous sandy beaches may now be covered in rocks, etc. Mother nature changes the river each year and has for the 20 years I have enjoyed the Newberg area.
 - b. If you have had the opportunity to take a jet boat beyond the mouth of the Yamhill you would witness firsthand the greatest erosion that I have witnessed on the river in my 20 years. There is a side of the river that collapsed to the point a cabin is nearly in the water now. That was not caused by boats as only a few boats physically can even get up to this point in the river. This erosion was caused by mother nature during the winter. The amount of water that comes down this river in the Winter is incredible and does not appear to be comprehended in this bill which conveniently puts the blame on the boaters.

Beyond the lack of evidence, the human side of this bill is catastrophic. My kids were raised on this river from as young as 4 weeks old and have learned so much from their experience. By limiting boats to

4000# towing, you are basically outlawing all wake boats on the river (mine included). This will force everyone to either stop the sport they love, force them to one area in the river which I cannot stress enough how unsafe that is, or force them to go to other areas that can't handle the boat volume either like Hagg Lake, Foster Lake, etc. There are not a lot of options as an Oregon resident where you can boat.

I know some people could say it is just watersports but it isn't just that, the River is way more than that for families that partake in this sport. The River is a Wednesday night as the sun is setting and you're eating dinner with your family talking about school, life, beauty of Gods creation. The River is watching the smile on a kids face when they tube or wakeboard for the first time and are proud of themselves. The River is watching someone struggle to surf or wakeboard then finally get it and realize they accomplished something they had never done. The River is the beauty of an Osprey pulling a fish from the water then struggle to get back to a tree. The River is taking another family out on your boat and giving that family an experience, they never had and talk about years later. These are memories burnt into my brain and countless numbers of other families.

Please consider the impact you are considering on the boating community along with their family and friends. For every boater you take this right away from, there are multiple additional families that you are also taking this experience away from because a good day on the River is better shared with some good friends.

I ask you to please oppose HB 2555 and HB 2755 and when you consider these bills please consider the absolute favorite thing you enjoy doing with your friends or family, and then, picture someone taking that away with as little justification as these bills have. Remember the kids when they are told that they can no longer tube on the river and you have no reason to give them other than wealthy people don't want wakes or a disingenuous argument about erosion. This bill would be invoking on our freedoms as Oregonians and setting a very unhealthy introduction to politics for our children. This bill is wrong on so many levels and I ask that you help keep Oregon waterways open to all to share.

Sincerely,

Rodney Myrick

Lifelong Oregon Resident