

Chair Witt and Committee Members,

My name is Steve Platt and I'm here to testify in opposition to HB 2555 and HB 2725.

I have enjoyed boating on the Willamette River since I was a child in the early 70's. 5 Years ago my wife and I decided it was time to make the investment in a waterfront home with a dock on the upper Willamette in Butteville. We often consider how amazing it's been to have the freedom to walk down our gangway and jump in our boat to conveniently enjoy the river together with friends and family.

Over the course of my time living on the river I have learned of the unfortunate effort of an organized group who wish to restrict the freedom which I and many others have enjoyed for so many years. This latest push for legislation (House Bills 2555 and 2725) aimed at virtually removing towed water sports for the majority of recreational boats is, in my opinion a drastic measure and unfair to so many people including those who really have no idea these bills even exist. Whenever I have mentioned this movement to friends or family they are astonished that something like this is even possible.

We are safe and responsible boaters who have complied with existing and changing rules including paying additional fees, applying wake boat decals to our boat and acquiring licensing specific to our boating type. We have operated our boat in the designated areas when and where it has been applicable. Even so we find ourselves battling to retain our freedom to enjoy what has always been a way to build relationships and enjoy the beauty of our great state.

It has been suggested that boat wakes are a major contributing factor in the erosion of banks and wear and tear on docks. I have not seen nor has anyone produced any empirical evidence of this being a reality. As a home owner I am able to see the river 365 days a year. We are usually one of the first to have our boat in the water and last to pull it back out in the fall. Every year we cruise the river in the spring to see the landslides and tree falls which have been spurred by the heavy winter flow. I have yet to see a single slide toward the end of summer after a heavy boating season.

Clearly there is varied interest in this natural and recreational resource and how it should be used and preserved. I support the idea of working together to find an amicable solution enabling all to enjoy and recreate in a safe and responsible way.

Thank you for hearing my testimony,

Steve Platt