

I am writing to oppose HB 2725 and HB 2555. There have already been numerous restrictions put on towed sports on the river, and I strongly feel that banning them all together is extremely unfair. My family and I enjoy spending our summer days on the river together while taking part in various wake sports including waterskiing, tubing and, wake surfing, as do many others. As a dad of 2 teen girls, this is one of the only ways that we can all spend the day together as a family without their phones being a distraction. It truly is a recreation that I cherish because my family and I get to spend quality time together. The river is meant for all of us to use and respect, not just a select group of boats. State waterways belong to all people.

By banning wake sports in certain areas, such as the Upper Willamette, the areas where they are allowed will become even more congested, creating an unnecessary safety hazard. The proposed section where wake surfing would be banned is already highly regulated to towed sports, and wake surfing is only allowed in two areas where there are no docks or homes.

As for banning all boats 4000lbs and over, this is clearly a measure to target all towboats. The smallest 20' boat that you can buy would still be banned using this criteria. While I do agree that some of the larger towboats weighing almost 12,000lbs do not have a place on the river, the 4,000lb limit is overkill in my opinion, because this would eliminate 90% of the boats who currently enjoy the river. I do agree that the current 6,000lb limit should stay in place.

Banning wake sports on the Upper Willamette would also hurt many small businesses in the area. Recreational boating helps support almost 6,000 Oregon jobs and over 400 small businesses. We certainly don't want to hurt small businesses any more than they have been.

Boater education and enforcement is the best way to help keep the river safe, not overregulation and exclusion. All different boating types and sports can exist safely, if there is education and enforcement of the rules for those not following them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Cassidy