

Dear Rep. Witt and Committee, My name is Alexis Whalen and I am from Keizer. My family and I are strongly opposed to this bill. My family and I enjoy boating on the Willamette river. I have three boys and currently boating is our only normal for them. Sports, school, and social interaction is not what it used to be. Boating is there one emotional release, where they can forget their worries and just enjoy life. As a family we chose to get a boat instead of making one vacation trip a year based on our income. Many boating trips versus one vacation a year is what we decided was best for our family.

I believe this is headed by special interest groups, mainly kayakers and paddle borders. I believe kayakers and paddle borders can use any water way but they are trying to take away the one and only river deep enough for a boat in the valley. Between three teenagers schedule and my husband's work, it is very hard to find time on the boat. But 25 minutes to get to the river for a short trip is way better than two hours to get to the lake and spend all day.

I keep hearing that boaters are destroying docks, this is false. You already have limited us to a very small section of the river. Those sections are farmland and there are no docks. What is frustrating is in the limited space that supposedly is for surfing only you will find tubers, wake boarders, kayakers, and paddle boarders. You educated surfers on what we are allowed to do, but you never educated the other people that are on the river.

I've heard numerous people say that we are unsafe but we are not. We have more education than any other public person out on the water way about water safety. You made us get a boating license which took at least four hours of education, then you made us take an additional wake surfing education. There is no education for paddle boarders or kayakers. There is no additional education for jet skiers and fisherman. If you look at the past years you will not see a wake surfer who has died. But you will find kayakers, fisherman, paddle boarders, and sadly at Foster reservoir last year a jet skier who killed innocent kids. Four days ago Portland fire was out dragging for a body of a fisherman who went under. I would like to remind you that there are no wake surfing boats out there right now so we did not cause an accident. During winter season there are multiple kayakers who die, we are also not responsible for them because we are not out on the river currently.

When someone stated yesterday that there is a lot more tubing injuries than previous. I would like to point out that they are in the surf only area and there is more people tubing than there has been in the past. I must state that tubers are far more reckless people on the river than us. They're all about throwing kids off the tubes, they purposely want to have kids flying across the water. To be able to throw your kid off the tube you must swerve and make crazy movements with your boat which is dangerous. Half the time they cut us off or ride closely behind us to catch our wakes. They should definitely be required to take a safety course. Surfers are going in a straight line at 10 mph versus tubers that are all over the place at 25 mph.

The last thing I have would love you to answer is WHO paid for the scientific research? It seemed very biased. I would like to point out that rivers change all the time, great example would be the Colorado river carved out the Grand Canyon, pretty sure there were no Surfing boats back then. This is nature and the five months of the year, limited to very few days of the week cannot be destroying the river. I have kayaked down many parts of the Willamette that are not deep enough for boats and I have seen erosion in many sections. You are selectively looking at a limit a section of the river but if you open your eyes you would see erosion everywhere. Thank you so much, please vote no on 2555. Alexis Whalen