

March, 10, 2021

Chair Witt and Representatives of Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee-

We are writing today in strong **opposition** to the **HB 2555 and HB 2725** bills being considered.

Our family has enjoyed the river in our backyard for 20 years. We live in Wilsonville and moor our boat during the summers at our neighborhood dock. We have enjoyed paddle boarding, kayaking, swimming and boating on what we have called "our river" for all of those years.

We have picked up litter, hauled large trees and towed people who have run out of gas. That's what community does for each other and our home surroundings. We have a modest boat but one that will most likely be affected by this weight limit being proposed.

It is my understanding that some on the committee are concerned that "wealthy individuals" who own these boats over 4000 lbs are taking over the river so others can't enjoy it. Nothing could be further from the truth. I would submit that the group of people pushing this is the wealthy and wanting a Lake Oswego type of setting. That they are the ones wanting exclusivity to the river and eliminating the majority of people who will now not be able to enjoy their public waterway if these bills pass.

I would also encourage you to recognize the absolute power you are exercising when you take away a public waterway from people. Also acknowledging that this will eliminate investments that have been made by hundreds of families living on the water.

We have never seen or heard of people being "tossed off of a dock" as stated by Rep. Neron. If there is a safety issue that this is being based off of, I haven't seen the stats or examples of that.

There is a small group of people spreading falsehoods for their own agenda and it seems some representatives are buying into it. These bills are directly targeting a specific group which strips them of all river rights based solely on hearsay and conjecture by a vocal group that wants the river all to themselves. I have heard both sides of this issue speak of reports of science supporting each side. I think it's important to remember, you can find "an expert" on any side to support the argument you are aligning with.

Using the 4000 lb number would eliminate most modern fishing boats, runabouts, pontoons, etc 20' and larger will be excluded from towing on the river since most of them are over 4000lbs. Pushing all these boats to smaller and smaller confines will only exacerbate safety and any environmental issues in those areas.

It may seem like you are hearing plenty of feedback pushing for these regulations. Rest assured you are only hearing one side of the story as we, the boating community, have been pursuing rational responses such as boater and river user education and collaboration.

These boaters you are going to eliminate have already paid extra per person for a towing license and have already reformed to the two area restrictions set forth last session. Give this latest solution's last session a try. It has only been one summer of trying these fixes and compromises. Please don't pick away each session at public waterways until they are completely eliminated.

We need leadership and policy based on facts that defend and protect safety, access, and the environment for all users and wildlife. Evidence needs to support such environmental claims.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mike and Laurie Hieb
Hieb4@comcast.net