

I was disappointed to not be able to speak my opposition to HB 2555 at the meeting last night, but I am grateful to be able to express it here.

I work in the boating industry and am on the Upper Willamette during all months of the year. Saying that the bank erosion that is happening is solely due to Wake Boats is irresponsible and egregious. Personally seeing the difference between the river level in the summer and the level in the winter, it is unbelievable that would have zero effect on the banks. Not to mention the amount of debris, logs, and full trees that run down the river! The so-called studies and video evidence do nothing to prove that wake boats have caused the bank erosion. There is no way that the 16 or so days a year where the river is very busy with boating traffic all the damage that is being alleged was caused by wake boats.

In addition, the Upper Willamette is already so restricted for towed watersports (without much guidance or enforcement) which has caused overcrowding in other areas of the river. Further restricting access and creating even more rules will make it even more confusing and cause other areas of the river to become MUCH LESS SAFE. Trying to put all towed watersports into smaller and smaller areas makes it more dangerous to have people in the water and I am shocked that river user safety wasn't even discussed during the meeting.

The 4,000lb weight limit is overreaching and is targeting specific river users without much reasoning as to why. Rep Witt kept saying there are scientific studies that are impartial, but this is simply NOT TRUE. It is one group of river users trying to ban another group of river users and the whole meeting was incredibly one-sided as to who had the time to speak and who's voices were heard.

We in the boating industry are open to having (and WANT to have!) conversations about how we can all work together to have a safe, beautiful, and more enjoyable river for everyone, but this bill is not the way to do that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.