

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Written Testimony HB 2555 and HB 2725

Hello and thank you for serving the needs of this state by becoming a lawmaker. My name is Marli Lintner. I'm a veterinarian specializing in birds and a homeowner on the Willamette since 1987. We live just outside of Wilsonville towards Newberg in the Newberg Pool area of the river.

I am an avid birdwatcher and have concerns over destruction of habitat, but my concerns over the wakeboat issue were brought to a head by listening to the testimony on these bills last evening.

We've been involved in attempting to preserve and protect the Willamette River since the Marine Board rulemaking that culminated in the "No Wake Enhancing Devices" rule of 2008. We considered that rule to be a huge step forward in protecting the river, but it was unfortunately not well enforced. As the manufacturers devoted more and more resources and technology towards building wake boats, they developed ways to pump ballast from tanks in seconds. The sheriff's deputies quickly realized that it was quite difficult to "catch anyone in the act".

If you have Googled the issue lately, you can see that as the manufacturers build and sell more wake boats, the issues caused by them have spread. There are battles being fought in many US states and on many continents around the world. Some give their equivalents to our Marine Board a much broader mandate. Unfortunately, the OSMB is funded by boat owners and the Board is largely those that make their living from boating. It is difficult for them to be objective. Other countries consider not just boat owners, but habitat and other environmental concerns, as well as property damage issues when dealing with this issue.

The testimony from the wake boat enthusiasts last evening demonstrated some points I would like to discuss. There is a large cry for education, studies and "collaboration".

- This is a stalling technique that has been VERY effective over the last 15 years or so. We have tried the education, but you can't "educate" a wave how to not cause damage. If these boats operate at wakesports speeds, they will cause damage unless the river is much wider and the banks are much firmer than in the Newberg Pool.
- As witnessed at the earlier hearing, there is already quite a body of evidence. We don't need more studies; we need to act on the ones that we have.
- There have been attempts at collaboration and compromise. These have caused the multitude of administrative rules and then statutes that have greatly confused boaters and the enforcement community alike. We don't need more attempts at this. What we need are rules such as 2555 and 2725 (without the change to 6000lbs) that make things both simpler to understand and easier to enforce, while at the same time giving the Willamette River a fighting chance to survive.
- Huge wakes are not needed for family fun. The problem is that this has gone on so long that more wake boats have been sold to more buyers. If a good solution had been

implemented 15-20 years ago, the boat dealers would not have filled their lots with wake boats. People would have purchased smaller boats and we wouldn't be where we are today.

- Simply stated, we don't need any more information to understand that when a 4 foot wave hits a dock, it will create safety issues and will likely knock down any toddlers there. Most docks are only about 18" above the waterline. Over time, the dock itself will be damaged. The shorelines are similarly affected. Why does it continue to be possible to operate a wake boat in such an area?

Please take this opportunity to do the right thing for the river and for the future of local boating by voting yes on 2555 and 2725 without the amendment to change the limit to 6000lbs. It is a whole lot easier to sell a boat and buy a lighter one than it is to repair a river.

Thank you
Marli S. Lintner, DVM
Wilsonville, Oregon