

### **C. Nick Palmer Testifying in opposition to HB 2555 and 2725**

I've enjoyed boating on this river safely and responsibly since I was a teenager in the late 90's and have a lifetime of great memories there. Today my family and I are frequent users of the Willamette River, specifically in the Newberg Pool. Throughout the summer months we often enjoy paddle boarding, swimming, as well as boating along the river. Yet, the legislation being considered will curtail the use of our favorite pastime - boating. This is a time we get to enjoy intentional relationship building and memory making with our grade-school-aged children and their friends. It has been an especially great retreat this last year as we had been cooped up, indoors, and isolated then able to enjoy a safe, healthy, and socially distant outdoor activity.

Safety is paramount in all our family activities, we are consistently conscious of all other users on the river, and I am fearful of what happens if these bills do in fact pass. As we make fewer spaces for these boats to enjoy the river, the crowding and congestion in the areas allowed will be detrimental to the safety of those sharing the space. It is an avoidable accident waiting to happen.

I am also concerned about the economic impact. From boat dealers to boat repair shops, to moorage operators and local restaurants we frequent for takeout from every time we go out many small businesses will be affected. Frankly, now is not the time to impose further hardships on our small business owners and the thousands they employ.

The boating community, especially wakeboard/wake surf operators, are already the most educated and financially tolled of all users in the Newberg Pool. Through the "Towed Watersports Certification" we have continued to make investments in boater/driver education a priority for river users. It seems far more prudent for law enforcement to focus on matters of safety and existing laws of the river for the peaceful enjoyment of all NOT new laws that seek to ban an entire category of responsible, highly educated, users.

Lastly, I am troubled by the process this bill intends to study the effects of boats weighing over 4,000 lbs. It is submitted that there will be a ban, then a study will be conducted. This arbitrary poundage limitation affects most boats enjoying the river in the summertime, yet there is no proof, just suspicion, these boats are harmful to the river environment (which I care deeply about). Considering the reasons listed above, it is much more prudent to conduct the study, and if then it is determined boats of a particular weight contribute to the destruction of the river environment, then support the ban.

This public waterway is, and should remain, for all to enjoy. One person's preference for fun or pleasure should have no precedence over another when both are enjoyed safely and responsibly. I urge you to consider the entire impact of these bills and oppose them vigorously with your colleagues.

I thank you for your time and consideration.