

Chair Wagner and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing in strong opposition to SB 857. As motorboat owners, our family and friends get so much enjoyment out of spending time together on the river swimming, boating, tubing and surfing. We are responsible, respectful, safe and educated boaters and enjoy the river in exactly this manner.

Over the last few years we have seen sections of the river become no longer usable for us and our recreational choices. Additionally, just this year, the Oregon State Marine Board took action to restrict towed sports from the Hawthorne Bridge to Waverly marina and restrict surfing from the Hawthorne Bridge to Willamette Falls.

The restrictions we have seen go into place are causing congestion in areas that allow towed sports making this type of recreation hazardous and unenjoyable. As polite and respectful users of this specific section of the Willamette we feel we're being singled out and that a waterway that belongs to the entire community will only be enjoyed by a select few. We do not feel this is the correct way to create a safe river nor the best way to manage our state resources.

Here are a few points to consider:

- This bill is identical to HB 2725, introduced by Representative Witt. **The House already extensively debated this bill and did not move forward.** Oregon needs our senators focused on COVID, economic recovery and getting our kids back in school.
- During this global pandemic, boating is one of the only family recreation activities we have been able to do safely. Taking this safe, socially distant activity away during this time is especially hard to swallow.
- **This bill is not based on science.** There is no empirical evidence that directly links perceived erosion on the river banks or dock damage to wake boats. Real studies should be conducted first to determine the best ways to keep the river safe and healthy.
- **The Newberg Pool is already one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon,** and wake surfing is only allowed in two small zones with no adjacent homes.
- This bill not only exacerbates safety issues, but **it also fails to solve a primary issue - enforcement.** The state has already struggled to enforce the laws and rules we have, and the bills do not address how to deal with the worst offenders who make the river dangerous for everybody

We're fearful if this type of overregulation continues it will put an end to a recreation that we highly value. We're fearful it will also crater yet another sector of our local economy by destroying jobs and businesses supported by boating. Recreational boating brings 1.6 billion in annual economic impact to Oregon and supports nearly 6,000 jobs and more than 400 businesses. This year especially, we need to be focused on preserving and bolstering small business recovery, NOT destroying it.

I hope you will consider the above points and our strong opposition to these proposed new rules so our entire community can enjoy recreating on the Willamette River.

Respectfully,

Ashley McFerron, OD