

Dear Senator:

I urge you to oppose SB 857. 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. The bill is unnecessary and is designed by special interest groups to overregulate Oregon waterways. It is bad public policy and will further impact Oregon families and small businesses.

This bill would strip safe, socially distant, equitable, outdoor opportunities for hundreds of families along the Willamette and impact local small businesses. Recreational boating brings \$1.6 billion in annual economic impact to Oregon. It supports almost 6,000 jobs and more than 400 businesses, including marinas, gas stations, mechanics, restaurants, dealers and more. This year, we need to be squarely focused on bolstering small business recovery and fueling our local economy.

This bill is not based on science - There is no empirical evidence that directly links perceived erosion on the riverbanks 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. Our waterway policies should not favor select waterfront homeowners and paddlers looking to eliminate motorized boating for their own personal gain.

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.

The 4,000-pound maximum loading weight limit stated in SB 857 has no basis or research conducted behind selecting such a weight limit. How can you restrict something before you know a cause? It's practically an outright ban on towing that kicks off more than two-thirds of the families who recreate in the Newberg Pool, preventing families from spending quality time together building memories.

Furthermore, the Newberg Pool is already one of the most highly regulated waterways in Oregon. Wake surfers and wakeboarders are already limited to a 3-mile, mostly uninhabited stretch of the river. They are also subject to additional safety certifications, annual taxes and further regulation restricts the sport and creates inequality and access issues.

This legislation is born out of special interest agendas and is not representative of the community at large. These policy agendas are put forth by groups whose ultimate goal is to diminish motorized boating across Oregon.

I hope you will consider the impact of these unnecessary proposals and vote against SB 857 on the upcoming session. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Atkinson