

Dear Chair Wagner and Committee Members:

Today I am writing you in support of SB 857. As a professional geologist and expert in environmental issues, and in particular stream function and restoration practice, I urge you to advance this bill and help protect the Willamette River for its many broader functions and opportunities. As a long term resident of West Linn and former Mayor engaged in our regions smart growth, I urge your support to help us protect this vital water resource, which is already seriously compromised, for future generations.

Motorized craft known as Wake Boats have grown in size and impact, today reaching the point where their very presence is problematic and adversely impacting the environment and all other river uses/users. A small group of motorized boaters, along with their industry's lack of accountability, seek to divert attention from the impact of their craft.

As you know, out of state corporate funds are supporting a lobbying effort that distorts the truth, and seeks to dissuade legislators like you from taking any meaningful action to address their damaging craft. A few individuals who can spend \$110K and up on a craft designed to generate surf waves on inland waters are affecting all others using our inland waters. Ironically they seek to call other river users "elites" because we have pushed back on their narrow interests - but this industry lacks the broader understanding and values of a much greater majority community of river users and appreciators of our vital natural resources, and they have frankly become tone-deaf regarding their entire industry and the science behind their destructive conduct.

Your support of SB 857 can:

- Protect the Willamette River's nearshore habitat and species listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
- Protect numerous homeowners who have documented damage to their boats, their docks, and shorelines due to artificial wave action.
- Protect all other majority river users who are subject to the whims of these boaters. Swimmers, power boaters, paddlers, and those who fish have been threatened by these craft and have experienced well-documented incidents with damage to their craft, including boat swamping and significantly degraded river experience.

This issue is real, and change is coming. It is occurring all over the United States where these craft are having a very real negative impact. By placing a weight limit for towed water sports boats, we protect the Willamette on this stretch, we protect private and public property, and we protect other (majority) river users.

This is not about more "education," which has been tried time and again - it is now time for action! Please support this bill and our regional efforts that will create huge benefits and more opportunities for the river and for the thousands of other (majority) river users affected by wake boats.

Thank you for your consideration,
Russ Axelrod