

Thank you for serving the constituents of Oregon and giving us the opportunity to share our views regarding boating regulation on the upper Willamette corridor (Newberg Pool).

I am submitting testimony to oppose SB 857. This legislation is born out of special interest agendas and is not representative of the community at large.

We are advocates of supporting and enforcing the Towed Watersport Initiative introduced in 2019. It seems like a fair way for everyone to share public access to the river. Unlike Oswego Lake, the river is a public waterway.

We purchased land on the Willamette River in 2016. While building our home, we purchased kayaks and love strolling along the shoreline looking at wildlife along the way. Once our home was built, we purchased a boat and envisioned spending days on the river with family and friends. We were willing to pay top dollar for land and willing to pay very high property taxes every November to realize this kind of lifestyle. Now we learn everything paid for and planned for, may not come to fruition because of proposed limitations, SB 857, placed on boaters wanting to enjoy specific boater activity (surfing and wakeboarding).

The river is an incredible natural gift that should be available to everyone, for every purpose. The Towed Water Sports Initiative was developed to educate boaters and designate safe spaces on the river for all activities. Today, only 3 of 30 miles allow surfing. Twenty-seven miles of the upper Willamette are designated for all other forms of water sport. The towed water sports rules have been in existence for less than two boating seasons. Why would legislators vote to restrict surfing and wakeboarding before realizing the results of enforcement?

Our waterway policies should be grounded in solid research and favor the general public, not select waterfront homeowners and paddlers looking to eliminate motorized boating for their own personal gain. Real studies should be conducted to determine the best ways to keep the river safe and healthy. Furthermore, 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.

Please resist a knee jerk reaction to disenfranchise a whole group of users. Take the time and effort to be inclusive of all boaters for all uses. Thank you for the opportunity to share.

Sincerely,  
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