

I am writing to passionately express my opposition to Bill 857. I beg and plead for you to openly and open-mindedly consider all of the view points from public and written testimony that are opposed to this bill. Please value our input as residents and river users/stewards who feel we are being ignored and marginalized by your peers in the senate and house that are proponents of this legislation and have what appears to us unlimited access to influence your opinions on the outcome. We strongly feel this Bill is a WOLF IN SHEEPS clothing. Proponents really want to privatize the river to keep "strangers" off the river where it happens to be their back yard, or to make for ideal rowing/paddling conditions. They hide behind other false claims with unrelated science and studies talking about shore erosion, silt balance and fish damage. There have been zero actual studies of any of these issues and if true what their actual causes are. Proponents don't want to study, they just want to get rid of boats. In essence they want to SHOOT FIRST & AIM LATER. There are studies that talk about non-native plant species along shorelines causing issues, or over-watering by sprinklers and such to keep non-native grass and trees watered. So much of proponent testimony is heresy. They allude to trees falling – and I am sure they do, but I live along the river and can observe hundreds of trees that float down the Willamette and they've all fallen for a multitude of reasons on related to boats. Perhaps age, fires, lifetime, weather should be considered. Sometimes trees just start growing in a compromised spot. There's been no fish studies, and what fish are we tracking? Its not Salmon for the upper Willamette as they can't navigate the falls and of course there is all the dilapidated construction there that is likely a bigger issue. How about fisherman and fishing boats that outnumber "wake boats" by a hundred to 1 in the summer time and more so in the offseason. Many former members of the OSMB have expressed opposition to this bill as have many members of the Oregon Dept of Fish and Game. Why is there input so easily dismissed, true vested and expert opinions.

Let's find an inclusive and comprehensive solution and protect the hundreds, maybe thousands of boating families and kids that recreate on the river. The sections in question / concern by the proponents are highly regulated already, but for them that isn't enough and they want to ban boating on the entirety of the river from the source to the falls. How can we have such egregious rules that are so far reaching. Sadly, being voted on by a few people that all due respect likely don't have a direct perspective/view of the river or "wake boats". Proponents of this bill like to pull headlines from TV or magazine commercials that talk about big waves or tsunamis – but lets be adults – this is the game of advertising and everything is embellished. How about so many car commercials that tout speed and horsepower that are in excess of what would be considered non-reckless driving or speeding?

Lets be smart and due some real studies. Determine if there is an issue and quantify it. Find the true cause of the effect, not just lash out at boats, unaware or uncaring of the families and kids that recreate in them.

There's been so much mis-information touted again and again by the proponents of this bill that many take it as fact or truth when in fact it is not. Again, I bet of you please open-mindedly listen to view points from the opponents of this devastating legislation. Let's get our government focused on the more important and really devastating challenges of the economy, the pandemic, jobs, housing, racism and so on.

Regards,  
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