

Submitter: Megan Meagher

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

I have boated on the Willamette and other bodies of water in Oregon for 21 years. I partake in all types of watersports from waterskiing to surfing. For the Willamette and the Newburg pool area, the newer style wakeboard/surf boats are too large for such a narrow river. Myself and others like me, cannot operate a boat at cruising speed while in the area of these heavy surf style boats. Their wakes are so large it's unsafe to maneuver other boats without dropping to low speeds. Many times we have been lounging in our boat on the side of the river and been swamped by a passing surf boat, taking on hundreds of gallons of water over our bow. We have also seen small non-motorized boats and paddle boards be damaged and riders be tossed from these wakes. If we are skiing in our boat our wake bothers nobody, but we cannot ski when oncoming or passing a large wake surf boat we can't maintain cruising speed without the risk of injury to our skier and boat passengers or without risk of damage to our own boat. I do myself take part in wake boarding and surfing, but not on the Willamette. We are responsible for our wake and know that river is too small for sports using large boats and wake enhancements. The massive boats just driving with nothing in tow tears up the water. There are rules already in place for being responsible for your own wake, these heavy boats violate these rules just by being on the river because the river is too narrow. The only part of the Newburg pool that is wide enough for these boats is the stretch of water way that is from the falls upstream about a mile. However this area is one of the most used areas by paddle boarders, swimmers and kayakers. There is also a water show ski team that has a home base in this area that has been a fixture for decades that is being impacted by these large surf boats. This team has practiced here for generations and performs pyramids, barefoot skiing, and ski jumping. These large surf boats are currently making these waters dangerous for their practice activities, as well as making it dangerous to stand on their dock and causing damage to their dock. Which again, this all circles around to the FACT that these boats are having a negative impact on all other boating. I fully support this bill. These boats need to move to larger bodies of water.