

Submitter: Greg Blefgen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

Please consider this written testimony in OPPOSITION of SB 1589.

As a tow-boating enthusiast that has enjoyed water recreating along stretches of the Newberg Pool over the past 45 years, I am opposed to SB 1589. SB 1589 would impose over the top restrictions to a multitude of families and fellow tow boat enthusiasts that have enjoyed recreating on this section of the Willamette River. The limited and one-sided studies that have been conducted by certain environmentalist groups fail to address the natural bank erosion that continues to evolve with climate evolution.

Residential development, not boat wakes, is the primary human-caused source of erosion. There is broad agreement that the lack of native vegetation and homeowner mismanagement of native trees has caused the majority of erosion. Furthermore, natural occurrences such as last winter's storm have a greater impact on river health than boating.

There is no empirical evidence or peer-reviewed study that links the proposed restrictions to having any positive effect on fish populations. Wake sports largely take place in the summer, outside of key migratory or spawning months. Studies show that wake boats waves, when operated at least 200 feet from shore, do not carry enough energy to have a significant impact on most shorelines.

The Newberg Pool is already one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon. Wake surfers are subject to a weight limit, required to obtain a special safety certification and only allowed in two small zones with no adjacent homes or docks.

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 extensive laws and rules we have, and the bill does not address how to deal with the worst offenders who make the river dangerous for everybody.

Subjecting only towed water sports enthusiasts to a weight limit is overtly biased. A 5,000-pound fishing boat can produce a similar wake to the same size tow boat. Furthermore a 15,000 cabin cruiser that produces a wake far greater than any wake surfing boat can still operate freely under this legislation.

Respectfully,  
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