

Submitter: Erin Patterson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

Dear Senate Committee,

My family and I greatly enjoy many boating water sports in the Newberg Pool. We find it heart breaking that the bill has returned, whilst the same issues still remain. I am opposed to SB 1589.

At the highest level, there is no research to support lowering the current boat weight limit or banning wake surfing to any increase in fish populations. In fact, wake sports largely take place in the summer, outside of key migratory or spawning months.

If there was concern of fish impact, the data would show a decline over the last 10 years as the sport has increased in popularity. However, the 2021 Willamette Falls fish passage data show that total counts have remained steady compared to the 10-year average and many species have experienced an increase over the last two years.

A recent opinion was shared from an ecosystem restoration engineer, David Gorman, that speaks to the actual effects of erosion, which are linked to residential development and mismanagement of native plants and trees. His work is to reverse these issues of erosion in these areas, not the small surf zones.

I personally live behind a cove on the Willamette River and we've had some serious erosion in our neighbors bank. We live in a no wake zone, which would point to a non-boating issue, including 12+ ft annual flooding.

At the end of the day, the political nature and personal opinions seem to be leading this versus the hard data and the true issue, which will always exist, enforcement. These conditions make for a very confrontational and unsafe environment.

Wake surfers are already subject to a weight limit, required to obtain a unique safety certification, and only allowed in two small zones with no adjacent homes or docks.

The Newberg Pool is one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon. It's time we do our due diligence and conduct studies to determine if different boat weights affect erosion or fish health. Without it, we have a lot of people saying opposing arguments, and many that are simply not true. These types of false hypotheses, should not lead our legislative narrative.

It's time we put our legislation time and efforts around the graver issues our society faces versus summer boating 2-3 months a year.

Thank you for your time. I recognize that we are back here again and appreciate you all.

Sincerely,
Erin Patterson