

Submitter: Jeffrey Blank

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

Oregon Legislature,

I am writing you to oppose SB 1589. We made a choice last during the pandemic to purchase a boat and have thoroughly enjoyed boating on the Willamette and other waterbodies. We would like to continue to be a boating family, but must have access to our rivers to do so. We enjoy watersports, but are also respectful of others who live along the waterway, or use the river for other purposes (fishing, canoe/kayaking, etc). This legislation is clearly born out of special interest agendas, namely residents along the Newberg Pool including a state Senator who originally sponsored this legislation, and is not representative of the community at large. This is clearly a “not-in-my-backyard” situation, made worse by a politician who doesn’t have the greater community in mind, but rather who own personal interest. As a resident and tax-paying citizen of the state, that’s unacceptable and it is frankly unethical, especially when the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has been quoted stating that wake sports have little to no effect on salmon and steelhead populations. ODFW further stated that during the summer months, when wake sports are most popular, those species already have completed migration through the area. So the science is there, yet a few self-interests are still pushing for more regulation. The Newberg Pool is already one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon, with wake surfers being subject to a weight limit, required to obtain a special safety certification, and allowed only in two small zones with no adjacent homes or docks. The pool is also used by large fishing boats and cabin cruisers, which can produce similar large wakes, yet they are not regulated. And if the esteemed politician who lives along the river and is proposing these new regulations is frustrated because of loud music ... we already have laws to address that.

In summary, our waterway policies should be grounded in solid research and favor the general public, not select waterfront homeowners looking to eliminate specific motorized boating for their own selfish personal gain. This bill will negatively impact many Oregonians who have legal rights to safe access and use of our waterways and I strongly recommend you all oppose this legislation. Our state has many more pressing issues to address!

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Blank