

Submitter: Jay Martens

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

Dear Senate Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition of SB 1589 which will change the rules on the Upper Willamette River from Oregon City to Newberg. There are rules in place at this time that limit activities in various areas of the "Newberg Pool" from Canby to Newberg. These rules have not been allowed to have enough time to be determined to be inadequate. The push to ban "Wakeboats" is largely because some private parties, including some in your midst, are trying to limit the activities of others on a public waterway to suit their own interests. In essence, they will have a nearly private river to do as they please. This is not a private water body like Lake Oswego, this is a navigable waterway belonging to the citizens of this great state.

The supposed damage that is being caused by the targeted group has not had sufficient research conducted to be able to determine that there is a correlation to their activity. The paddler groups and private homeowners behind this push to rid the river of wave makers is not founded in science, but rather in rhetoric. Fish are wildlife that must adapt to their environment as they have done for millions of years. They are not so fragile as to be harmed by some surface waves or a little sediment in the water, if they were they would not survive a storm or their trip to the ocean. This is ludicrous and even the Fish and Game Department has said that there is no proof of harm to young fish by boats making waves.

There are rules already in place to deal with anyone damaging docks or other private property with irresponsible or reckless behavior. The enforcement of those rules should be conducted and the river should remain open to all that wish to use it for recreation. If there are users that are not following the rules, they should be educated and fined appropriately. The changes to the lower river rules that were enacted last year have not had time to prove out if they were detrimental or beneficial. The safety of the stretches of river left to towed watersports is in question by law enforcement and fire department officials as they have stated. When we put too many users of one type in one area we are asking for collisions and potential for innocent children and adults to be harmed or killed by overcrowding.

My family of 7 plus new additions has recreated at Willamette Park above the falls for over 20 years and we have wakesurfed from the park to just above the houseboats for at least 12 years with very few issues. This is the only stretch of the river that is very well suited to this activity since the river is lined with boulders for the railroad on one side and boulders along the mill ponds and city water treatment ponds on the

other. There is no erosion occurring and the river is 30 feet deep in all areas. There is absolutely no need to add any limits to this area. If any limits were to be made they should be made to not allow any paddlers on this stretch of river as there is no need for them to risk going over the falls. They have the entire lower river to use and the Tualatin River mouth to Canby to explore.

I hope that you will table this idea as there will not be any good to come out of this proposal. Selfish rules by selfish individuals will only lead to more conflict and there will undoubtedly be users that will outright ignore these rules. This will put stress on our law enforcement officers and they should not have to deal with a private battle of rich homeowner elitists versus people just trying to have fun with their families. Enforce the current rules and fund some studies to assess the real problems, not rhetoric.

Sincerely,

Jay Martens, husband and father of 5 girls. Watersports enthusiast and law abiding, courteous boat operator.