

Submitter: Walt McMonies

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

My name is Walt McMonies. I submitted similar testimony before the Senate committee and am doing so again before this committee. I co- own a farm near Newberg along the Willamette River, within the Newberg Pool. I am writing to urge your support of SB 1589 which limits wake surfing and caps the weight of a boat undertaking towed watersports to 5,000 pounds. This is a very generous poundage and would allow the majority of towed watersports boats to continue their activities. For reference I have a 24 foot high performance boat which I keep in Portland which weighs about 3900 pounds. This proposed law would only affect the largest of the wake boats and hopefully help prevent most damaging wakes from hitting the banks. Such a law would be consistent with and complement the law you passed in 2019, HB 2351, which mandated that shoreline within the Newberg Pool be protected from the effect of motorboats.

I have seen the impact of the wakes in our area. The wakes undercut the river banks and the river turns brown with sediment with each large wake. The erosion is a direct result of the impact of the surfing wakes. Of course other wakes are factor as well, but the surfing wakes are especially large and powerful. Studies show it takes over 500 feet of water distance for a surfing wake to dissipate to the size of a waterski wake. The river is only 600 feet wide at our farm. Clearly the river is not wide enough for this activity.

I also have safety concerns. When we were boating in the Newberg Pool near our farm last June we encountered a wake surfing boat going the opposite direction. Despite cutting the engine to stop our boat, I was thrown up in the air and came down on my hip and back. I had to make two trips to two emergency rooms, one in Newberg and one in Portland. An x ray ultimately showed I had a cracked vertebrae as a result of hitting the wake. I suffered extreme pain for the entire summer and had to take pain medications for a month. These large wake boats do not belong in this part of the Willamette River. They are too dangerous and destructive.

Thank you for your consideration. Walt McMonies.