

Submitter: Ann-Marie Yost

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

As a kayaker and Willamette Riverkeeper member, I support SB 1589. This bill will help to restrict the impact of Towed Water Sports boats and mitigate their negative impact on the banks of the Willamette River and the river itself. .

This bill concerns Wake Surfing Boats, and those conducting towed water sports, weighing over 5,000 lbs, which are specifically designed to create massive artificial surf waves on inland waterways. The Willamette does not generate such waves naturally, and the impact on the riverbanks and water is clear. This erodes the banks and creates difficult conditions for kayakers and stand up paddleboarders.

Part of the effects on the shore concern the nearshore “nurseries of the river”. These nurseries support a range of species from wild fish, freshwater mussels, to birds and mammals. These shallow water areas extending up to 50ft from the shoreline are where the artificial waves slam into the river bottom, and the riverside. This also creates unpleasant conditions for nonmotorized water sports.

Of 165,000 registered power boats in Oregon, only 500 have the Towed Water Sports certificate, and not all of them use the Newberg Pool. This small minority should not be allowed to damage the river, its shores and ecology and disrupt the activities of other water sports practitioners.

The science is clear - established riverine biologists have concluded that there are negative impacts for the Willamette, from the letter to the Marine Board from NOAA Fisheries, to fisheries biologists at OSU and others. In addition, a recent study from the University of Minnesota also clearly concluded that Towed Water Sports boats are NOT like other motor boats and concluded that wake boats need to be at least 500ft from shorelines to protect them, a condition that is not possible in the Newberg pool.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and I plead you support this bill. It is the right thing to do for the Willamette River's health, and for other river users impacted by these craft!