

Submitter: Colin Meskell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

I am writing in support of SB1589 which will limit the size of boats that are able to obtain a Towed Watersport boat decal. These massive boats are designed to produce a sizable wake to optimize the wakeboarding and wake surfing environment. The issue with this is that the wakes left by these boats does not stay contained within the area of the rider, but instead extend from shoreline to shoreline. This effectively decimates the entire river water surface and subsurface for the benefit of one individual. The large wakes from these boats, which oftentimes form breaking whitecaps, interferes with and disrupts the use of virtually all other users on the river: paddle-boarders will drop to their knees or risk falling off their board; kayaks and canoes need to turn into the waves or risk capsizing, fishermen need to take a seat in their boat to avoid being thrown off balance; other towed watersports such as waterskiers and even tubers have to cut their speed and drop from the towed vehicle so as to not risk injury to the rider or tow boat;. I have even witnessed the sheriff's boat having to quickly cut power and change direction into the wake so as to avoid damage to the boat and officers.

While wakesurfing is restricted to two small sections of the Newberg Pool, these boats will still produce the disrupting waves while traveling to and from these river sections causing just as much disturbance as if they were engaged in the restricted activity. Thus the restriction on where these activities occur has not changed the effect of these boats on the river. Limiting boat size and forbidding the use of wake-enhancing devices outside of the wakesurfing areas will greatly reduce the size of waves along most of the river and will increase the overall enjoyment of the river for the vast majority of users.

Thank you,
Colin Meskell