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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

I am a long-time and frequent kayaker on the stretch of the Willamette River known as the Newberg Pool. I absolutely support SB 1589 in order to alleviate the negative impact of towed water sports boats on the river. In the last few years, the number of these boats has increased dramatically, along with a lot of dangerous behavior.

These boats are ruining the river, both its ecosystem and for the people who enjoy it. Frankly I don't why someone hasn't been killed by a wake boater out there yet. I'm an expert-level kayaker and have had wake boat waves swamp my boat, flip me over and bounce me hard against a dock (smashing my shoulder) while I was trying to get somewhere safe so as not to be run over. I have also observed waves from these boats throwing a fish up on the river bank (I stopped and gently moved it back into the water) and I've seen them swamp lines of turtles off of waters' edge logs where they were sunning themselves, a behavior they need for survival. If you're out there in a kayak, it's easy to see these waves eroding the soft mud of the river banks in real time.

The Willamette's Newberg Pool area is simply too narrow to accommodate the wakes from these boats without damage and safety issues to other humans and its delicate ecosystem.

Some particular points:

* Wake Surfing Boats over 5000 lbs are designed to create massive artificial surf waves. This is not natural for the river and its delicate ecosystems.

* These artificial waves negatively impact everyone and everything on the river and its banks. Occasionally they are life threatening to other river users, especially children and less experienced users of human-propelled craft.

* The shallow water areas along the river banks support a tremendous amount of wildlife and biological ecosystems. They are being heavily damaged by artificial waves.

* This new law will impact only the small number of power boats that create large artificial waves.

* Well established biologists have concluded that these boats damage the Willamette ecosystem. The science is well known and clear.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences. I hope you will support this very sensible bill and return some sanity, safety and protection so that all may enjoy and thrive in this much-loved and valuable stretch of Oregon's water.