

Submitter: Brandon Simmons

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

Dear Legislator,

I'm writing to oppose bill 1589, banning towed watersports on the Newberg pool. As a member of the recreational boating community, I am writing to ask you oppose Senate Bill 1589 this session and allow the Newberg Pool to be safely shared.

Hundreds of local families safely enjoy tubing, wakesurfing, wakeboarding and waterskiing in the Newberg Pool. These cherished pastimes support \$1.6 billion in economic impact, nearly 6,000 jobs and more than 400 local businesses. Unsubstantiated weight limits proposed in SB 1589 will force the majority of these families off the river, negatively impacting our community.

The Newberg Pool is already one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon. Wake surfers are subject to a weight limit, required to obtain a special safety certification and only allowed in two small zones with no adjacent homes or docks.

Residential development, not summer boat wakes, is the primary human-caused source of erosion. There is broad agreement that the lack of native vegetation and homeowner mismanagement of native trees has caused the majority of the erosion. Furthermore, natural occurrences such as last winter's storm have a much greater impact on river health than boating.

There is no empirical evidence or peer-reviewed study that links lowering the current boat weight limit or banning wake surfing to having any positive effect on fish populations in the Newberg Pool. Wake sports largely take place in the summer, outside of key migratory or spawning months. Scientific studies show that waves from wake boats, when operated at least 200 feet from shore, do not carry enough energy to have a significant impact on most shorelines.

This bill exacerbates safety issues, and fails to solve a primary issue – enforcement. The state already struggles to enforce the laws and rules we have, and the bills do not address how to deal with the worst offenders who make the river dangerous for everybody.

I encourage you to oppose SB 1589 and instead support increased education and enforcement of existing boating regulations, combined with investments in site-specific research and bank management.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Brandon Simmons