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On Behalf Of: A plea for common sense
Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources
Measure: SB1589

We own property on the river. We're down on the dock and in the river on our boat almost every day in the summer months and as a river property owner it's not boat wakes

that concern me about damage to my property, it's large trees and current in the winter

that keeps me up at night. Our neighbor's dock recently broke loose and floated away.

It wasn't from a surfer going by, it was in January when the current was ripping through.

It doesn't take a scientist to notice that the erosion problems arise from when the river

is high in the winter months, not during summer.

Residential development, not 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 erosion. Furthermore, natural occurrences such as winter storms have a greater impact on river health than boating.

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

This bill fails to address the primary causes of declines in salmon and steelhead abundance in the Willamette Basin. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service latest report degraded habitat conditions due to land use and development activities, predation, hatchery practices, and dam passage - not boat wakes - are the primary concerns.

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.

This bill not only exacerbates safety issues, but it also fails to solve a primary issue – enforcement. The state has already struggled to enforce the extensive laws and rules we have, and the bill does not address how to deal with the worst offenders who make the river dangerous for everybody.

Subjecting only towed water sports enthusiasts to a weight limit is overtly biased. A 5,000-pound fishing boat can produce a similar wake to the same size tow boat.

Furthermore a 15,000 cabin cruiser that produces a wake far greater than any wake surfing boat can still operate freely under this legislation.