

Submitter: Julie Palmer
On Behalf Of: The Palmer Family
Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources
Measure: SB1589

I am writing to you today to voice my strong opposition to SB1589

My family and I are frequent users of the Willamette River, specifically in the Newberg Pool and are very troubled by the reach of this bill. Throughout the summer months we often enjoy paddle boarding, swimming, as well as boating along the river. Yet, the legislation being considered will curtail the use of our favorite, socially distanced, pastime of boating.

I'm especially troubled by the way the proposed law has made it to this bill. This is not based on scientific studies or evidence. It is not our role to make laws based on fear, suspicion, or a hunch. In fact, we do know that power boats greater than 4000 lbs. do not erode shores (runoff from the property above the river does that), do not harm fish (as stated by ODFW Deputy Fish Chief, Bruce McIntosh), and do not harm property (never mind a dock is private property placed on a public waterway).

Further, I am fearful of what happens if this bill does in fact pass. As we make fewer spaces for these boats to enjoy the river, the crowding in the areas allowed will be detrimental to the safety of those sharing the space. I'm also concerned about the economic impact. From the boat dealers, to boat repair shops, to the local restaurants we get takeout from every time we go out. Frankly, now is not the time to impose further hardships on small business owners and the thousands they employ.

The boating community, especially wakeboard/surf operators, are already the most educated and financially tolled of all river users. Through the "Towed Watersports Certification" we have continued to make payments to the State and jump hurdles to enjoy a sport that causes no evidence of harm.

We cannot let the views of a few vocal people ruin the enjoyment of our public waterway. It is for All to enjoy equally. Law enforcement should be focused on matters of safety and existing laws, NOT new, arbitrarily written laws that seek to ban an entire category of boats and users. I urge you to consider the entire impact of this bill and oppose it vigorously.

Sincerely,

C. Nick & Julie Palmer

Wilsonville, OR