

Submitter: Erin Patterson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

It is hard to understand why this bill continues to return year over year, and use up our legislative time that should be better utilized for the current issues we face. I am opposed to SB 1589, which would ban hundreds of families like mine, from recreating on the river.

There needs to be a comprehensive study conducted on the Newberg Pool. You've heard testimony that we don't need a specific study, that assumptions and opinions should be good enough. It is never good enough when we're talking about restricting public access. Proponents of this bill are trying to pin very large multifaceted issues on one type of boat that only operates a few months of the year in a three mile stretch, and using misleading photos taken in areas that don't even allow wake surfing. I have to ask how is that possible?

During a neighborhood meeting, a homeowner asked an organization claiming river damage from boats, why they wouldn't do necessary studies first, and was told they don't have too, its "intuitive" to them. But that's not how science works.

There is no research to support that lowering the current boat weight limit (for only wake boats vs all boats) from 10,000 to 5,000 or banning wake surfing would provide an increase in fish populations. Wake sports largely take place in the summer, outside of key migratory or spawning months. I ask the house to ask these questions: why are wake boats being targeted without any evidence or site specific research. Under this bill, a 15,000 cabin cruiser that produces a wake far greater than any wake boat would still operate freely. Legislators have simply cherry picked an arbitrary number to place on this bill, for no strategic reason.

If there was fish impact, the data would show a decline over the last 10 years as the sport has increased in popularity. However, the 2021 Willamette Falls fish passage data show that total counts have remained steady compared to the 10-year average and many species have experienced an upswing over the last two years.

Recent testimony from ecosystem restoration engineer, David Gorman, speaks to the actual causes of erosion, which are linked to residential development and mismanagement of native plants and trees. OSU claims docks themselves change the dynamics of the shore line. There are currently no docks in the two, small surf zones. I live behind a cove on the Willamette River and we've had some serious erosion on our neighbors bank, despite getting no boat wakes there.

The Newberg Pool is one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon. More so, than a complicated ecosystem like the Rogue, where they properly conducted a case study which indicated that recreational motorboats do not illicit a response from juvenile Chinook Salmon.

It's time we do our due diligence and conduct studies to determine the facts. Without it, we have a lot of people making unfounded arguments. I hope you'll join me in not allowing assumptions to create our laws and oppose this bill.

Thank you.