

February 23, 2022

SB 1589

Hello , My name is Chris Mitchell

Esteemed Senators,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I am a boater, paddleboarder, & Willamette Riverfront Property Home owner

I am also the chair of the West Linn Riverfront Association an organization representing some 450 plus Willamette Riverfront Homeowners.

I am respectfully firmly opposed to SB 1589.

This is concerted effort by the special interest groups, the Willamette riverkeeper and the Calm Water coalition pushing for the complete ban of surf boats - under the guise of unproven erosion claims and fish safety, – it appears they will use any and all reasons to ban a sport they do not like – very reminiscent of the groups who opposed snowboarding , and skateboarding in their early days.

Since the inception of wake surfing on the Willamette, salmon numbers have risen, not dropped, (if we want to see them further grow, perhaps the fishermen need to stop taking them!!).

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, predation, hatchery practices, and dam passage - not boat wakes - are the primary concerns. A case study conducted on the Rogue River in southwestern Oregon indicated that recreational motorboats did not illicit a response from juvenile Chinook Salmon. When examining potential fish impacts, it's also important to consider all relative factors. There is little information available on the specific impact of wake surfing, nor recreational boating in general, on habitat conditions or fish in the Willamette River.

The extent of juvenile rearing habitat for ESA-listed fish in the Newberg Pool reach is unquantified.

The heavily touted letter from NOAA provided as evidence has not been authenticated and was from the pen of a junior employee at NOAA not the signer of the lette

5000lbs is arbitrary, after all the talk of waterskiing wakes being ok - My tournament rated waterski boat will not be allowed on the river this rule in its current form were to pass.

Why should a 10000lb cabin cruiser be allowed on the water any more than a 7000lb sports boat.

This proposed law singles out a specific class of boat & implies that one group of users is unable to be trusted to comply with a law, while another group of users is not subjected to the same rules. Surfing is already banned in most of the area in question, so the size of boat should be moot, if all users are following the laws.

It is the job of law enforcement to make sure the laws are followed by everyone .

It is not the position of law makers to decide who can & cannot be trusted to comply with said rules.

To reiterate; There should be no user bias on vessel weights, as this makes an assumption that a certain group cannot follow the rules, while another group should outright be trusted to do so!

– Over the last 8 years I have experienced the exact erosion issue which is being used as a reason to limit boat weights in front of my home.

But unlike the locations used as erroneous evidence of said “wake boat caused erosion”, my house is positioned on the river behind an island ,where there are absolutely ZERO wake boat wakes, or wakes of any sort, as wakes are not achievable in front of my house - thus demonstrating that the erosion in question most probably is actually not caused by wake surfing boats at all.

There are multiple studies which show that it is homeowners lack of stewardship of their foreshore & the annual flooding that occurs creates property line erosion rather than the boat wakes.

PLEASE DO NOT PASS THIS POORLY CONSTRUCTED RULE.

Thank you for your consideration,
Chris Mitchell