

Submitter: Joseph Howell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Measure: SB1590

Testimony to OPPOSE Senate Bill 1590

Dear Chair Golden and Committee Members,

As 27-year residents of the Willamette Valley, we raised our kids in Newberg and Woodburn and have played in the Willamette River, swimming, fishing, paddling rafts, kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards, as well as just lying on the surface and enjoying the scenery around us through the years.

My family was very happy to see Senate Bill 1589 pass, which put limits on the weights of boats that could tow wakeboards, inner tubes, and waterskiers. Some four years of legislative work went into this bill to protect the nearshore habitat areas of the river, its shorelines, shoreline property, and to enhance the enjoyment of other users of this stretch of the river.

Even with SB 1589 in place, I have seen people operating these heavy boats in the Newberg Pool area in violation of the Senate Bill, at the peril of people in smaller craft. They don't seem to care about other users of the waterway. Nor do they seem concerned at how their violations impact the shoreline, riparian habitats, or anything other than their own enjoyment. Apparently, they don't think that the law should even apply to them.

These boats comprise a tiny percentage of the overall boating population, yet they cause a huge percentage of the damage in the Newberg Pool area. There are other, less vulnerable areas in which these boats can operate. They don't have to recreate in an area that sustains considerable, potentially irreversible damage like the Newberg Pool area.

Please vote to OPPOSE SB 1590, which would overturn the protections put in place and would again ramp up the degradation of this stretch of river.

Sincerely,

Joseph Howell