

Submitter: Maria Hall

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Measure: SB1590

Dear Chair Golden and committee members:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to hear public comment on this bill. My name is Maria Hall and I own a farm outside of Newberg along the Willamette River within the Newberg Pool.

I oppose SB 1590 and would urge this committee to not allow the bill to continue out of committee. As you likely know from past legislative sessions, this matter has been fully vetted and a compromise law, SB 1589, was passed by the Oregon legislature and signed by the governor in 2022. The legislature heard hundreds of stakeholders testify. They heard from experts on wake energy, hydrology, erosion, water quality, fish and other marine animal health. They reviewed internationally recognized studies on wave energy. In the end, recognizing that the large wakes produced by the heaviest boats were not appropriate in a narrow waterway like the Newberg Pool section of the Willamette River. Wake surfing, by design, requires extra large wakes to be enjoyed. SB 1589, the basis of current law, allows for every towed water sport except just surfing. It allows boats up to 5500 pounds to conduct towed water sports. 5500 pounds is a large boat. The average ski boat weight is around 4600 pounds. We have a boat that is used used for towed water sports which weighs about 3,500 pounds. My husband has a 24 foot 375 horse "go fast" boat that weighs 3,900 pounds. The 5,500 pound weight allowed under current law is clearly more than fair, especially for the Newberg Pool, with is relatively narrow and has soft steep banks . The 10,000 pound limit in the proposed bill is is ridiculous.

Another important point, and I speak from personal experience as we have a dock on the river, is the positive change in the river health and the number of river users since the current law became effective. Last summer we noticed more people canoeing, kayaking, using SUP's, fishing, waterskiing and wake boarding. More people could utilize the river without being swamped by surfing wakes. I've said this before in prior testimony, but surfing wakes prevent others from enjoying the river and they are dangerous. My husband suffered a cracked vertebra from the impact of a surfing wake hitting our boat. We had come to a standstill to attempt to minimize the big drop, but even that didn't help.

We have also observed that the water is clearer along the banks. There isn't a 20 foot ribbon of brown silty water next to the shore as there was when the wake surfers dominated the water. We are seeing a reduced amount of bank erosion as well.

No doubt the boat manufacturers, dealers and surfing enthusiasts do not like the reasonable limitations in effect on the Newberg Pool. But there are other places for these big heavy boats to surf, including the Willamette near Portland, the Columbia, and many lakes and reservoirs. Many more people are now safely enjoying recreational opportunities- the current law is clearly a success.

Thank you.