

OPPOSITION to SB1590 by Sharon Halle; submitted 11 Feb 2024

I moved to Oregon in 1991 and have lived on the Willamette for over 31 years. I've witnessed years of river misuse of the river by a small number of aggressive wake-surfing boaters. They do not care about all the damage they have caused to delicate shorelines, other boaters, swimmers, and paddlers. We've had to replace our entire dock due to severe wake damage.

I am a member of both the Oregon River Safety and Preservation Alliance (ORSPA) and the Willamette Greenway Alliance. We are joined by Willamette Riverkeeper, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Trout Unlimited, and The Native Fish Society. SB1590 would decimate the Towed Watersports Program that has done so much good to promote safe boating in the narrow, environmentally sensitive Newberg Pool.

- ❖ The Towed Watersports Program (implemented in compliance with HB2352) IMPROVED behavior on the river and REDUCED conflict. Certified operators of large and dangerous boats behave RESPONSIBLY in the Newberg Pool. HB2352 passed with a companion bill, HB2351, that required Goal 15 of the Willamette Greenway be met to protect the River, particularly in the Newberg Pool. SB1589 did just that.
- ❖ Boaters did not adhere to the decade-long ban on wake enhancing devices. The industry called for education and enforcement. That is what HB2352 and SB1589 have done. Strong rules are necessary to better manage recreational activity on the river and help law enforcement address safety and dangerous behavior threatening life, property and doing significant environmental damage to this narrow, sensitive section of the River.
- ❖ This legislation came out of a negotiated proposal between Wake Sports enthusiasts and homeowners on the river in 2019. We were struggling with property and environmental damage from the wave energy being created in the Willamette River as well as bad behavior from some wake sports participants. The wake sport representative (Matt Raddich) recently stated in a letter "if operators were more educated, that they would operate their boats in a safer and more low-impact manner."
- ❖ This program has worked well in the Newberg Pool and should be kept in place. Families can recreate in many ways with motorboats that don't create dangerous conditions.
- ❖ The initial weight limit was proposed at 3,500 pounds. It is the average loading weight of all boats registered to tow in the Newberg Pool. The current weight limit is nearly double what it should be – we compromised at 5,500 pounds.
- ❖ Any boat above 5,500 maximum loading weight can do severe damage and behave irresponsibly or dangerously. Lake Oswego set a 3,500 pound weight limit more than 10 years ago for safety reasons.
- ❖ Lastly, the Marine Board HAS THE AUTHORITY to change the specified boat weight through the use of scientific data on weight limits. Weight limits should focus on safety in the water, conflict in operation and damage from large wakes.

PLEASE VOTE NO ON SP1590.