

February 11, 2024

Senate Committee On Natural Resources And Wildfire
Regarding SB 1590

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and Committee Members,

My name is Karen Harrington, a resident of Willamette Valley, and member of the Willamette Riverkeepers. I am testifying in strong opposition to SB 1590.

One of the joys of living in the Willamette Valley is the beauty and accessibility of our rivers, the Willamette River being the major river in the valley. As a kayaker I appreciate the ability to launch my boat at multiple sites and spend the day enjoying the peace of the river, acknowledging the other boaters, and getting some exercise. My favorite days are going out with my grandkids. They love helping Gaga paddle and deciding where to stop for some lunch. I feel privileged to live in this beautiful spot.

I appreciated the legislators previous decision to limit river accessibility to wake boats. These large and heavy boats designed to produce large artificial waves, have no place in our rivers, especially the Willamette River. The ecology of the Willamette is already in a fragile state having to deal with pollution, drought, erosion of river banks, and loss of biodiversity. The shoreline habitat, a nursery for baby fish, including Chinook salmon, is disrupted by these large unnatural and out of place waves.

Oregon's rivers are an important part of our natural landscape. We are known for our beautiful rivers by outdoor enthusiasts, boaters, swimmers, and fisher folk. It is a thrill to spy bald eagles, blue herons, Canadian geese, the many species of ducks, and the occasional beaver, otter, or mink. Some boats just don't make sense in our rivers.

I urge you to maintain the current limitations on large, wave producing boats and keep the Willamette River accessible to the many Oregonians who find solace spending a day on the river. In my experience, our residents care about the health of the river and its wildlife. Let's protect it. Please do not repeal current restrictions of these disruptive boats.

Thank you for opposing SB 1590.

Karen Harrington
Member, Willamette Riverkeepers
Member, Tualatin Riverkeepers
Member, Climate Reality Project Portland Chapter