

Submitter: lewis mccoey

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Measure: SB1590

Dear committee members,

Thank you for considering SB 1590. I support this bill.

I have lived in West Linn on the Willamette River for 12 years. During that time, I have participated in many recreational activities and seen countless individuals participating in various recreational activities as well. These include fishing, sailing, paddling, kayaking, jet skiing, jet boats, various tow sports, and so forth. There was actually a neighbor of mine who flew his sea plane from his home two doors up from mine! Indeed, many citizens use the river to recreate.

Throughout my years on the river, I have never witnessed any issues that required the elimination of a single recreational activity. If anything, vehicle speed (i.e., jet boats) and quick maneuvers (i.e., jet skis) cause the most concern from my vantage point.

The elimination of wake surfing has not led to an increase in safety, nor has there been a demonstrable improvement in fish habitat or reduction in erosion and property damage. I have not witnessed nor experienced the benefits of eliminating wake surfing.

What I have experienced is a significant decrease in the time spent with my family enjoying a recreational activity of which each member can participate. I have also experienced neighbor turned against neighbor, vilifying individuals who captain boats that generate wakes. Further, I have witnessed an increase in safety concerns due to floating and paddling activities in the main channel/middle of the river.

I would ask you to make a decision based on fact, not feeling. Do you have quantifiable data from truly objective sources that indicate the continued need to ban towed sports? For example, a wake of 'x' has been shown to be safe for fish, banks, property, etc., while wakes of 'y' have shown negative effects. If so, how is that calculated? And if so, are you banning all crafts, towing or not, that generate a wake of 'y' (i.e., commercial uses, large pleasure boats, etc.)?

The river has had boats generating wakes for years and years. Traveling at 10 mph and in the main channel/middle of the river, a surfing wake would decrease in size likely commensurate with other boats traveling closer to the shore. Has anyone measured the size of a wake generated in the main channel of the river versus a boat

traveling closer to shore? That data would be compelling, as there are no bans on boats traveling outside of the main channel.

The arguments against towed sports simply fail. Main channel/middle river surfing does not create wakes on the banks or property any different than boats traveling outside of the main channel. Safety has not improved as a result of the ban. Surfing in a straight line at a very low rate of speed is not a safety concern (and never has been!). The safety concerns come from speed and maneuvers. Further, empowered floaters and paddlers occupying the main channel/middle of the river increase safety concerns as fast-moving boats have to dodge these difficult-to-see recreators. As for fish, long after we humans are gone, the fish will continue to occupy the river. On it's face, this was simply a nonsensical argument.

Please restore towed sports in total to our home river. If you need an interim step, perhaps you could evaluate alternating days/times for certain recreation. For example, allow towed sports in the early morning and later afternoon and paddling in the middle of the day. Or, create a recreation allowance on certain days of the week, alternating such that each type of recreation can be accommodated. Or perhaps, provide an allowance for home owners who, with a sticker on their vessel, can engage in towed sports during non-peak times. Visually, I can see when there is no traffic on the river. Without any documented erosion, property damage, fish issues, etc., why can't I go make a run down the middle of the river and come home without my neighbors taking a picture of me and sending it to the OSMB?

Thank you for your consideration!