

Submitter: Monie Gaba

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Measure: SB1590

I had the opportunity this morning to testify in person at the committee hearing as part of the expert panel supporting SB 1590. I was very disappointed at the end result as we were led to believe that our testimony would have bearing on whether or not SB1590 would be passed to a working session. It was obvious that Chair Golden and/or other members of the committee had already determined that it would not. My son was able to attend and wanted to testify about the impact the previous law had on him and our family, but he left the hearing room thoroughly disenfranchised by our legislative process. He's a Straight A student at Sherwood High School and wanted a voice at the table only to be disappointed by not being able to say anything. Regardless, I'm submitting my written testimony in the hopes that Chair Golden and the committee reconsider SB1590 for a working session during this year's legislative cycle.

As a proud father and an avid recreational boater, the ability to share the joy of wakesurfing with my children in the Newberg Pool has been a cornerstone of our family life. For us, it's been a surprising source of healthy outdoor fun, family bonding, and an opportunity for my kids to get out, socialize, and play. The passage of SB 1589 in 2022 had deeply impacted this tradition for us, affecting not only my family but many other children and families in our neighborhood and community as well. My family's cherished moments on the Newberg Pool, bonding and engaging in healthy outdoor activities, were abruptly halted by its passage.

When we were allowed to socialize with extended family during the COVID restrictions, we took the opportunity to invite close relatives from Bend and California to join us on our boat in the Newberg Pool. Many family members experienced a new sport and enjoyed socializing once again. The restrictions imposed by SB 1589 have stripped us of these moments, leaving a void in our family's life and in our community. It's been especially hard considering how wakesurfing served as a lifeline during the isolation of COVID lockdowns, offering us and our kids a safe haven when options were limited. SB 1590 will restore our ability to engage in wakesurfing safely and responsibly while keeping our environment protected. It is a balanced approach that considers all recreational river users and treats each fairly in accordance to their use. In fact, the vast majority of motorized boat users, kayakers, paddlers and others coexisted safely and peacefully in the Newberg Pool for decades prior to the wake boat ban! This morning, I cited that the Newberg Pool is 28.4 miles long. The two surf zones are 1.4 and 1.6 miles respectively, that's only 5% of the Newberg Pool per surf zone! Other users of the Newberg Pool have the rest of the 90% for their use and recreation. Passage of SB1590 is low hanging fruit and allows

access after two years to wakesurf on two very small sections of the Newberg pool that have no impact on personal property and arguably neither on the environment or local fish. It seems the pendulum has swung too far one way and SB 1590 will help make the necessary corrections to a equitable compromise for those concerned.

By supporting SB 1590, I'm not just advocating for the return of a safe, fun activity; we want to help the mental and physical well-being of our kids and families. It's a step towards reclaiming the healthy outdoor activities that have been instrumental in keeping our community and our families healthy, happy, and connected. I urge your support of SB 1590. While I've testified for my own story, almost 500 local boaters also support this bill and is a popular issue with a lot of support.

Thank you for your time this morning and for the opportunity to submit this written testimony now. Again, I sincerely hope Chair Golden reconsiders his decision and allows SB 1590 to move forward to a working session this year's legislative cycle.