

Submitter: Chantel Herbert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Measure: SB1590

Below is a written version of my verbal testimony, but before getting to that, I would like to address some of the comments heard from the opposition on February 13, 2024. Multiple times it was said that SB 1589 is already a compromise bill. IT IS NOT. Multiple times it was said that 5,500lbs is plenty heavy for boats to be used in the Newberg Pool, but they neglect to mention that the factory specified ballast is included in that 5,500lbs (even though ballast is not legal to use under SB 1589 in the Newberg Pool). Why is the ballast capacity included in the weight when it's not even legal to use it??

For example, my boat has a dry weight of 3,950. I use it for mostly waterskiing (small wakes). Because SB 1589 includes the MAX factory ballast numbers in the weight limit, my boat does not qualify for the Towed Sports Endorsement. I have not added additional ballast, but that doesn't matter. Again, NOT A COMPROMISE.

Chair Golden and Members of the Committee, my name is Chantel Herbert, and I'm the Sales Manager at Active Water Sports, a family-owned business headquartered in the Newberg Pool. Today I want to share my strong support for SB 1590.

I'm here on behalf of not only my 30+ colleagues who rely on public access to recreational boating for their livelihoods, but the 400 businesses and 8,000 jobs across Oregon that are supported by the recreational boating industry.

The challenges created by 2022's SB 1589 for our local small business, and our employees, have been enormous. The legislation kicked hundreds of registered and licensed families off the river and local small businesses, like ours, suffered sales losses in the millions due to the decline in recreation in the Newberg Pool.

The laws have directly led to reduced hours, loss of employees, and financial strain for our employees and their families. As a result of SB 1589, the number of people employed by Active Water Sports has dropped significantly. Nationally, boat sales have dropped an average of 15% within the last year. For us, with less boaters able to utilize our products in the Newberg Pool, boat sales have dropped by roughly 40%.

Luckily, we now have a solution to this problem and I'm calling on this committee to help us keep these treasured sports and this vital industry alive in the Willamette Valley. SB 1590 offers a lifeline. It repeals the restrictive measures of SB 1589 and introduces a balanced approach, one focusing on safety and education rather than outright bans. SB 1590 is a balanced, commonsense approach to this issue. This legislation recognizes the importance of our industry to the local economy and the value of education over restriction. It's a step towards safeguarding jobs while ensuring the safety of all water sports enthusiasts.

I spend a LOT of time on the river, not just professionally, but personally as well. I

have been an avid boater my entire life and love all the beautiful waterways Oregon has to offer. Since the passage of SB 1589, I have seen increased traffic on the lower Willamette, Billy Chinook, Hagg Lake, and more. Pushing recreational boaters into smaller areas not only makes it more dangerous for the boaters, but for everyone else utilizing the waterways as well. I am passionate about bringing new boaters into our community and giving them as much education and training as possible. Boating is something that should always been done safely, and I am confident that the passage of SB 1590 will help make the waterways safer.

Supporting SB 1590 is crucial for businesses like ours, for our employees, and for the communities we serve. It's about more than just water sports; it's about preserving local jobs, families' livelihoods, and the vibrancy of where we live. I urge you to support SB 1590 and consider the positive impacts it will have on our small businesses, local economy, and the well-being of our community.