

Submitter: Darby Collins
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Dear Chair Senator Sollman, Senator Brock-Smith, Sen. Golden, Sen. Pham and Sen. Robinson,

Re: Opposition to SB301

SB1589 has been a great success in the Newberg Pool section of the Willamette River. In limiting large wake boats on this narrow environmentally sensitive section of the river, we have seen more regular motor boaters waterskiing, wakeboarding and enjoying the river — along with more kayakers, paddlers and swimmers. Families are about to be out on the river and their docks because they are not afraid of being swamped or over run by heavy wake boats. 80 percent of our members say the bill has made a huge difference in their enjoyment of the river.

Now we are facing another challenge from the wake boaters and the wake industry. A small group of people who own boats costing \$150,000 to \$350,000 who drive others off the river.

SB301 will DOUBLE the weight of boats in the Newberg Pool. By removing the ballast prohibition, these 5,500-pound boats can ADD up to 5,400 pounds of ballast (industry stats) to their boats and we will one again be facing giant dangerous waves that damage property and threaten boater safety.

SB301 offers NO reputable science or background on changing SB1589 requirements. It is just another attempt by a privileged group to get their way and drive others off the river.

For years, the Newberg Pool took a pounding from these large heavy wake surfing boats. This section of the river is only 500 to 600 feet wide. It is a slow moving pool (hence the name) and the banks are silt based.

A peer-reviewed study by the University of Minnesota was released on Feb. 1, 2022 and it recommended that wake boats conducting towed water sports be greater than 500 feet from the shoreline or any structures like docks or other boats.

Scientists and credited engineers from Oregon State University, University of Portland and the University of Minnesota as well as others from around the world

have PROVEN these boats are destructive.

Most stretches of the Newberg Pool in the Willamette River do not provide that much width. The study makes clear that Wake Boats are not like any other similarly sized craft, and that they produce waves with larger size and energy, which makes them detrimental to river habitat, other river users, and private property. You can read about the study here: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2022/02/01/new-study-suggests-wakeboats-need-more-distance-from-shore-to-reduce-size-power>

SB1589 reset the weight limit to something closer to what boats weighed when the problems began in the early 2000s.

MOST boats are still able to recreate in the Newberg Pool because they are under the 5,000-pound limit. Those exceeding that limit can still use their boats — just not in a way that damages the river or others.

Also, SB1589 (under Section 4) allows the Marine Board to reexamine weight requirements through a peer-reviewed study. That is the best avenue to pursue any changes.

SB301 is not needed.

Please vote NO on SB301.

Thank you,

Darby Collins

Oregon River Preservation and Safety Alliance (ORSPA)? Boat owners and property owners supporting responsible recreation on the Willamette