

Submitter: Kameron Morgan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Dear Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

My name is Kam Morgan and I'm an active user of the Willamette River. I am writing you to express my strong support for Senate Bill 301. The towed water sports community has a very simple and reasonable request with this legislation to be treated equally to all other boat users in the deep waters of the Newberg Pool.

I want to personally say that I have lived in the Newberg pool for over 15 years and the impact that this has taken on the community is heartbreaking. I remember the river full of boats with everyone safely recreating. Friends, families, enjoying the river for the couple of months of nice weather we get a year. After the previous bill passed the river has been empty and devastated. Home values diminished, 90% of boating being banned by a select group of people. I want to see the river full again with friends and family enjoying the beautiful river we have to opportunity to recreate in that not alot of people have access to in this state. And right now we are not allowed to simply tow a tube or wakeboard at this time.

If there is a compromise I think surf zones are a great middle ground for future. Everyone wins it that situation. But this bill is a great start at bringing back a fair boating community.

Many boaters with ballast capability are unfairly excluded from participating in their favorite activities, such as tubing, water skiing and wakeboarding in the Newberg Pool, because their unused ballast weight is counted toward the overall weight limit. Today, a fishing or pontoon boat with a dry weight of 5,500 pounds is eligible to tow a tuber in the Newberg Pool, but an everyday recreational boat with a much lower dry weight cannot because it has ballast capability, which is prohibited.

This small adjustment makes it easier for the Oregon State Marine Board to manage the towed water sports program and for customers to understand which boats qualify. There is no national standard for registering ballast capacity, making compliance a moving target. The legislation's "maximum ballast capacity" is also overtly punitive. Families have purchased boats with smaller ballast capacity to ensure they are under the 5,500 combined weight limit, only to be denied a permit because their boat line has a model with a larger ballast, which they did not purchase.

I do not believe legislators intended to exclude more than 90% of new recreational boat models from the river, crushing local small businesses and making it almost

impossible for everyday people to buy qualifying boats. We want to have the opportunity to share the river, have fun with our families and safely enjoy the sports we love for a few months out of the year.

With this legislation, the Newberg Pool will remain one of Oregon's most highly regulated water bodies. To tow riders in this river stretch, boaters must meet the weight requirement, complete an online safety education course, apply for a towed watersports decal and pay additional fees.

Please support local small businesses and families like mine by passing this small yet meaningful ask.

Respectfully,

Kam Morgan