

Submitter: Owen Wozniak

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Committee Members,

I support Senate Bill 301, but strongly oppose the amendments proposed by Senator Meek. The amendments remove reference to ballast weight in calculating maximum boat weights allowed in the Willamette River's Newberg Pool. If you ever ventured onto the Newberg Pool prior to 2022's passage of SB 1589 (limiting boat weights), you will remember how much damage to salmon habitat, riverside vegetation, and private properties was being done by large-ballast boats designed for wake surfing. In addition to the resource damage they caused, these boats made it very unpleasant and downright dangerous to be anywhere nearby in a kayak, stand up paddle board, or other human-powered craft. They turned the river into a motorsports playground benefiting a very few at the everyone else's expense.

Whether intentional or otherwise, Senator Meeks' amendment would undo the good work of SB 1589 and open the door to the return of disruptive and damaging big wake boats. And why? It's not clear. It's STILL the case that fisherman, paddlers, and riverside homeowners -- to say nothing of fish and wildlife -- deserve an intact and peaceful river. It's STILL the case that the small number of people who want to enjoy wake surfing can do so in places much better suited to big wakes, like the many readily accessible reservoirs in the region.

Please don't take this step backwards. Please do not approve the Meeks amendments. Thank you.