

Submitter: Jessica Rohrig  
On Behalf Of: Willamette Riverkeeper  
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

As a member of the paddle craft community (canoe and kayak) and an advocate for the preservation of our riparian ecosystems, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendment that would increase the ballast weight of recreational boats on our rivers.

Wake boats, which can cost anywhere from \$70,000 to \$300,000, have an outsized impact on our waterways. Those who can afford these expensive vessels often wield more political influence, but they do not represent the average boater. Most everyday boaters and families who enjoy recreational boating within the current weight limits are committed to maintaining the integrity of our shared waterways. Increasing the ballast weight would only exacerbate the damage to our riverbanks, property, and the quality of the water.

Increased ballast weight leads to the destruction of fragile ecosystems and causes heightened turbidity, which is detrimental to juvenile salmon populations and other aquatic life. Additionally, the wake from larger boats can erode riverbanks and harm property, disrupting the enjoyment of the river for all users. These negative effects are primarily driven by individuals with the financial means to purchase such boats, who seem to believe their privilege entitles them to degrade the space that should be enjoyed by all forms of boaters and community members.

I urge you to reconsider this amendment and prioritize the needs of all river users, including those who engage in quiet, low-impact activities like kayaking and canoeing. The waterways belong to all of us, and we must ensure they remain accessible and sustainable for future generations.