



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

State Marine Board

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House Committee on Natural Resources

Chair Representative Brad Witt
Vice-Chair Representative Chris Gorsek
Vice-Chair Representative Sherrie Sprenger
Representative Greg Barreto
Representative Caddy McKeown
Representative Jeff Reardon
Representative David Brock Smith

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger and Members of the Committee:

RE: Written Testimony on HB 2352, Creating towed watersports program within the State Marine Board

The Oregon State Marine Board does not have a position on this bill. The bill concept was initially shared with the agency by interested stakeholders.

The agency has authority to regulate boating safety on Oregon waters. In 1999, Oregon was the first western state to implement mandatory boater education, requiring operators of boats greater than 10 horsepower to pass an approved boating safety education course. To date, more than 355,000 boaters have completed course training and received a boater education card.

The agency offers three approved options for boating safety education: classroom courses, internet courses and proctored equivalency exams. The courses are approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and include Oregon specific questions. Coursework covers state and local rules including slow-no wake, navigation, rules-of-the-road, equipment requirements, operator responsibility, emergency preparedness, aids to navigation, signaling (sound and lighting), docking and mooring, anchoring, situational awareness and operations of different boating activities in varying water environments.

Should HB 2352 become law, the Marine Board will work with vendors to modify an available curriculum to focus specifically on towed watersports, identify compliance factors, and offer coursework on a per-student cost basis. To implement the bill, agency staff will need additional resources for infrastructure, programming, reporting and data collection. The agency will develop training to help law enforcement officers effectively enforce the new law. The agency will create decals for boats and conduct rulemaking to establish the endorsement process. Educating the boating public on the new requirements will require an outreach campaign describing the pathway to compliance. New signage will be placed at all applicable waterways.



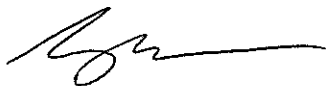
Oregon has many waterways favored by wake sport enthusiasts. While the Newberg Pool of the Willamette River is most notable, wake sport activities also occur below Willamette Falls to the mouth of the river including a congested stretch near Lake Oswego and downtown Portland.

Other waterways popular with wake sport enthusiasts include Lake Billy Chinook in Jefferson County, Loon Lake in Douglas County, Lake of the Woods and Crescent Lake in Klamath County, Prineville Reservoir in Crook County, Emigrant Reservoir in Jackson County, Foster Reservoir in Linn County and others. Wake sport activities continue to grow and evolve at a time when non-motorized activities are also growing and evolving, creating potential conflict and the need for additional education on safety, ethics and etiquette.

Boating safety education is important to the agency's mission. We continually urge all recreational boaters to be safe and courteous in their chosen boating activity for their own safety, the safety of their crew and others recreating on Oregon's waterways.

If I may provide any additional information or clarification, I can be reached at (503) 378-2617.

Sincerely,



Larry Warren
Director