

April 23, 2019

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Chair Senator Michael Dembrow  
Vice-Chair Senator Alan Olsen  
Senator Cliff Bentz  
Senator Floyd Prozanski  
Senator Arnie Roblan

**Re: In Support of HB 2351**

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members,

We are writing in support of HB 2351 that incorporates the Oregon State Marine Board into the state of Oregon's established Willamette Greenway regulations and believe this legislation which will help to further protect the Willamette River for future generations.

We have lived on the Willamette River (upriver from the Hwy. 291 bridge) in Newberg for 15 years and have observed in horror the consistent and ever greater erosion of the shoreline since the Marine Board prohibited wake-enhancing devices downriver from the Hwy. 219 bridge. Prior to that ruling, the shoreline had minor erosion from winter/spring flooding, but nothing of any significance.

HB 2351 is a needed step to incorporate and empower the Oregon State Marine Board to protect sensitive shoreline and habitat through its mission of regulating boat operation allowing the Marine Board to better manage boat wake energy to protect shoreline, property, fish and wildlife habitat.

It is our understanding that research demonstrates that the capacity of the shoreline to withstand the energy levels being produced by more and bigger boats along portions of the Greenway was exceeded quite some time ago and that damage is increasing at a rate commensurate with increasing wave energy levels. This research jibes with our observations.

HB 2351 would give the Oregon State Marine Board clear authority to enact rules in support of the other state agencies and local governments that have been tasked to protect shoreline and habitat along the Willamette River under the Greenway legislation. It would also help bring about coordinated planning between Oregon Parks and Recreation, the Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Marine Board in managing the river and activities on the river.

Over the past few years, increased boat traffic combined with larger and heavier boats being used for wake surfing have created a dangerous and destructive environment on the Willamette River. This is something that cannot be sustained. Something must be done to protect river banks, water quality, safety for motorized and non-motorized recreation and wildlife on the Willamette.

This legislation would empower a state agency — the Oregon State Marine Board — to work with other state agencies on boating activities in a coordinated manner to prevent continued damage to the Willamette. It gives OSMB clear direction to operate within Greenway regulations and help save the river for future generations.

Therefore, we urge you to support HB2351. We appreciate the opportunity to submit our testimony.

Best regards,

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