

Oregon Towboat Dealers strongly oppose House Bill 2352 as written

My name is Matt Radich, I am the President of Active Water Sports, an Oregon company which sells tow boats in Oregon. As both a dealer and a towboat operator I strongly oppose this bill as it is currently written.

I was a member of Representative Rich Vial's work group on this topic last year and I have put countless hours into working on compromises that will increase safety and mitigate wake-related issues on our waterways. The concept of a towed-watersports endorsement came from our work in this group. The idea was that if operators were more educated, that would operate their boats in a safer and more low-impact manner. I spoke with other tow-boat dealers and many tow-boat operators and all agreed it was a good concept. The problem with this bill is that it goes way too far and becomes punitive.

At its conception, this endorsement solely addressed a need for further education. It has now morphed into something punitive, directly targeted to keep tow-boaters off the water. It was never intended to have a charge every two years. It was never intended to gather boat information or limit boat sizes. What started out as something simple and good for everyone has turned into a bill that if passed, could have a drastic and detrimental effect on towed sports. The proponents of this bill have taken something good and changed it to the extreme.

I estimate that the towed sports business directly accounts for roughly \$40-60 Million in annual sales revenue in the state. It employs hundreds of people and supplies large amounts of tax dollars to the state. Passing this bill as it is currently written could have a large effect on those numbers. There are also tens of thousands of towboats registered in the state, passing this would do one of two things; force them to pay another fee or boat elsewhere creating an overcrowding and safety issue in another area.

The towed-sports endorsement started off with good intentions, it was hijacked by one side and is now a bad bill. I urge you to vote no or amend it back to a meaningful bill that has consensus across user groups.

Please take time to consider this carefully. It has become a bill with too much baggage.

Sincerely,

Matt Radich
President, Active Water Sports
Representative of Oregon Tow Boat Dealers