

To the joint committee on Ways and Means,

As one of the leaders of our coalition I want to again make clear that what is needed for effective safety on the Willamette is enforcement of the existing rules which is currently not happening. During the marine board meeting last week a number of us were having a conversation, the Sheriff, marine board employees, calm water group representatives, and myself representing the Willamette River Community Coalition. We were all very much in agreement that first and foremost the problem is that there is currently almost no enforcement of existing rules on the river, because there are simply no resources available for it. That is the conversation that should be taking place in the legislature, funding to enforce the rules that already exist on the river so that the handful of people in any activity or sport who are not being safe can be held accountable.

We came up with some possible solutions which we discussed that night that everyone was in support of and which we think could help fund enforcement on the busiest days on the river by charging a small fee to all river users. This would be a fair and equitable way to look at funding rule enforcement on the river.

And this is the type of idea we should be looking at, how to make everybody accountable and responsible for education safety and enforcement. Not targeting just one group with unfair and unnecessary, and possibly not legal, additional restrictions, rules and fees in place creating an undue burden to access a federally navigable public waterway.

The existing rules need to be followed by everyone not just wake athletes, and they need to be enforced which as the Sheriff acknowledged is not happening right now. This would resolve many of the issues we all see on the river and would make a huge difference in safety for all of us and would increase the ability for us to share the river harmoniously. We have shared our experiences and concerns that made clear there is a lack of education and common courtesy among other groups on the river, but this was ignored in favor of pushing through this bill that unfairly targets only wake sports.

The Marine Board is in the process of seeking out and gathering information from many different users groups. This is the correct and effective way to proceed so that everyone's concerns can be heard and addressed. And then our river community has an opportunity to work together to find common ground something as mentioned above that we have already started to do and have plans to continue, to create a way to make sure education and enforcement are taking place across all river activities which is the only way it will be effective.

thank you, Paige Stoyer