HB 2725 -2   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

Prepared By:	Stuty Maskey, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates:	3/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes that the maximum loading weight of a motorboat inclusive of the factory-specified dry gross weight of the motorboat and the factory-specified maximum ballast capacity of the motorboat must be less than 4,000 pounds for the owner of a registered motorboat to obtain a towed watersports motorboat certificate. Requires that a towed watersports motorboat certificate issued by the Marine Board (Board) in the form of a decal must be affixed to the forward portion of the motorboat, visible above the waterline and in accordance with rules adopted by the Board. Authorizes the Board to conduct a study related to increasing the maximum loading weight and requires that the study determine based on objective, peer reviewed scientific research whether increasing the maximum loading weight is likely to have an adverse effect on the waters, beds and banks, aquatic, nearshore and shoreline habitats, fish and wildlife habitats and salmonid habitats; or exceed or violate state or federal turbidity limits. Requires the Board to consult with and receive comments from the Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Environmental Quality prior to making a determination. Directs Board to report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly on the study findings, determinations, and recommendations, including recommendations for any legislative changes. Extends requirement that a person carry a towed watersports endorsement if engaged in any towed watersports within Newberg Pool Congested Zone. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.
FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Changes the definition of 'Newberg Pool Congested Zone' from the portion of the Willamette River beginning at river mile 30 and ending at river mile 50 to the portion of the Willamette River beginning at Willamette Falls, river mile 26.6 and ending at the mouth of the Yamhill River, river mile 55. Specifies that the definition of "towed watersports" is the meaning given by the State Marine Board, but does not include wake surfing. Defines "wake surfing" as the activity of propelling an individual forward on equipment like a surfboard, using a boat's wake wherein the person may be holding a rope or free riding. Adds the equipment used in wake surfing may include but is not limited to wake surf boards, wake boards, stand up paddleboards and hydrofoils. Prohibits a person from using devices or individuals to increase wakes or engaging in wake surfing within the Newberg Pool Congested Zone.

BACKGROUND:

The Willamette River Greenway was first proposed in 1967 by Oregon Governor Tom McCall to enhance the scenic, recreational, historic, natural, and agricultural qualities along the Willamette River. In 2019, the Oregon legislature authorized Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) to adopt special regulations to manage boat wake energy within the Willamette River Greenway. In addition, the towed watersports safety education program was created in OSMB that required motorboat operators to hold a towed watersports endorsement and motorboat owners to hold a certificate decal when engaged in towed watersports in specified congested waters.

House Bill 2555 would establish that the maximum loading weight of a motorboat must be less than 4,000 pounds to obtain a towed watersports motorboat certificate. It would authorize State Marine Board to conduct a study on increasing the maximum loading weight and require that the study makes determinations and recommendations to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly based on objective, peer reviewed scientific research and after consultation with the Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Environmental Quality.