

Testimony against HB 2755 and HB 2555

One reason to reject HB 2755 and HB 2555 is by scientific principle alone. Large wakes are not solely generated from boats 4000 pounds or more. Consider the science of physics regarding constructive wave interactions. Waves added together result in a higher wave. Boats less than 4000 pounds are capable of creating large waves. A small boat's wave combines with other boat waves or their own boat waves, resulting in large wave scenarios. How a boat is operated, speed, depth and the frequency in the same location has not been factored into this amendment. Is there proof that specific wave sizes have been correlated to erosion or damage that this amendment addresses? Can any research show data that larger waves have a bigger impact. Yet if they did, that would still fail to isolate the culprit to a certain type of boat, as smaller boats make wakes and those smaller wakes merge resulting in larger wakes. Boats 4000 pounds or more are being unfairly targeted and therefore HB 2755 and HB 2555 should be rejected.

The second reason to reject HB 2755 and HB 2555 is the lack of empirical evidence that directly links the cause of erosion or damage by boats in general. Consider scientific research that shows a large impact on shoreline effects like wind, floods, currents, and vegetation. Addressing the natural dynamics of river systems must be considered. Rather than scapegoat and blaming one entity, communities should look to mitigate the ever changing river shoreline by utilizing bank protection to reduce the effects of a multitude of factors.

Third, businesses that support recreational boating will be negatively affected by amendments HB 2755 and HB 2555, if customers are no longer able to use their boats there. Consideration for the boat owning community is just a small factor to consider with this bill. The impact upon businesses has been overlooked in this amendment. It is the businesses that provide services and income from marinas, recreation, fuel, and lodging that will suffer economically, if these hastily written bills pass, then businesses would lose, close or have costly relocations. These bills would also affect those employed by the boating industry. Consumers in the area would be traveling or moving out of the Willamette River neighborhoods, which is counterproductive to why they invested to live or work there.

Fourth, there are already permits and zone requirements pertaining to how boats must operate regarding wake responsibility and best practices on the Willamette River. The proposed amendments should address how to better enforce these recently introduced boating laws on the Willamette River. Rules already exist that prohibit wake sports near homes along the river. The safe operation of any size boat is the priority. Prioritize safety and address management for those who make our river dangerous regardless of boat size.

In summary, do not restrict 4000 pound boats from operating in the Willamette River. Do not ignore the physics of large waves that smaller boats are capable of producing. Do not target 4000 pound boats and present false claims. Do not omit environmental factors like wind or water currents, floods or vegetation that have a significant impact on shorelines. Do not forget the recent regulations and The Towed Watersports Education Program which provide respectful and responsible solutions for boaters sharing the Willamette River community. Do not dismiss the businesses, employees and families that have invested in recreation and neighborhoods of the Willamette River. Do not pass HB 2755 and HB 2555, as these bill amendments are flawed.

-Sincerely
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Citations:

Oregon State Marine Board. Boater Info. Wakes

<https://www.oregon.gov/osmb/boater-info/Pages/Wake.aspx>

“All boats create a wake and all boaters are responsible for their wake. You can be proactive and reduce your wake simply by changing how you operate your boat to having a lower impact on those around you.”, “Many factors influence the size of a wake. These include the speed, size, design, and operation of the boat, as well as factors like water depth, speed, and temperature.”

Oregon State Marine Board. Newborn Pool Study Guide.

https://www.oregon.gov/osmb/forms-library/Documents/Education/2020_Jan_TWSSStudyGuide_a.pdf

Chapter 3: Wake Management

BoatUS Foundation

<https://www.boatus.org>

“Extra displacement also can occur with the weight and shape of the pulled tube.”, “Do not power turn unless absolutely necessary—this displaces extra water and can be dangerous.”, “The power turn creates roller wakes that can stack with other waves and potentially impact other boaters.” and “Driving your boat repetitively past one section of river all day concentrates your wakes”

Investigation of motorboat-induced streambank erosion on the Lower Deschutes River

<https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/defaults/2b88qh38b>

“Furthermore, bank erosion occurs in many places where motorboats are not the cause for erosion. Hence, motorboats should not be generally blamed for erosion problems.”, “Investigation of motorboat-induced streambank erosion on the Lower Deschutes River. The greatest cause of bank erosion is natural erosion by strong currents and eddies during floods, at flow constrictions, and where flows are deflected toward the banks . Bank erosion occurs in river reaches where motorboats are excluded. Hence , prohibiting the use of motorboats will not halt bank erosion .”

Time Magazine’s Time-lapse project

<https://world.time.com/timelapse2/> and <https://www.vox.com/2015/2/5/7986829/river-meander>

A river’s path changes over time. Factors that affect these changes include speed of the water, the landscape itself, and sediment. To quote Vox, “we think of rivers as stable features of the landscape: something we can build towns and cities next to, and expect to stay in the same spot permanently. But in reality, they’re constantly moving”