

I have operated recreational watercraft in the Newberg Pool since 1981, almost exclusively in towed water-sport activity. I understand that the legislative committee members of these two house bills are being inundated with an industry funded and focused feedback against these bills. The written call to arms from the boating industry claims that these house bills are "designed to take away your rights to wakeboard, wakesurf and will severely limit all towed sports". They are telling boat owners that these house bills are evidence that they are being "attacked and persecuted" when boating in the Newberg Pool. Industry is claiming severe business losses, drops in home values, and general catastrophe if these bills pass. They make no mention of the underlying issues and concerns that are prompting the need for these house bills. I want to ensure you that these bills are indeed needed, measured, and have broad support.

One primary issue continues to be the accelerated erosion. This is causing property damage yes, but also destruction of habitat. The mechanism is very straight forward, observable, and no longer in doubt. During the low summer river levels, large high energy wakes cut away at the bank footing. Chocolate stripes of eroded material can be seen down both sides on busy river days as this bank material is carried away. The winter high water soaks the mid and upper bank making it heavy. Without the support below it sloughs off. Research shows at least 500 feet would be required to attenuate these wakes to any meaningful degree, and that is impossible to provide in the Newberg Pool. The ban on wake enhancing devices of 2008, could have had an impact, but was never enforced. Since 2008 the size of boats has exploded, and the problem compounded. While 4000 lbs could be argued as insufficient, it will provide significant relief.

The feedback that the boating suppliers will go out of business, and that many will loose their favorite water-sport is false. All the top performance boat manufacturers (like Malibu, Mastercraft, Naticque, etc) have performance boats that support this proposed weight restriction. One only need to visit Lake Oswego (enforced max boat weight of 3500 lbs) on a summer morning to see brand new performance boats towing wake-boarders and wake-surfers.

Taking action now actually preserves all users and all uses. If we continue to kick the can down the road on this, the situation will digress to the point where only one option will remain. That is making the whole Newberg Pool a 10 mph no wake zone. This has indeed happened in other water bodies in other areas of the country. Those that falsely claim that a 4000lb limit will hurt property values, will have a legitimate issue should the upper Willamette have to go "no-wake". We need the diversity and expertise on the Marine Board that HB 2695 calls for to keep issues like this from getting to crisis level. I give my strong support to the thoughtful proposals in these two house bills.