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House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Chair Representative Witt  
Vice-Chair Representative Breese-Iverson  
Vice-Chair Representative Hudson  
Representative Cate  
Representative Marsh  
Representative McLain  
Representative Post  
Representative Reardon  
Representative Brock Smith  
Representative Williams

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, Vice-Chair Hudson, and Members:

**This testimony is provided in support of HB2555 and HB2725** which amend recreational boating regulations for the Newberg Pool Congested Zone of the Willamette River (ORS 830.649).

I've been involved in water sports in one form or another for most of my life. As a teenager, my friends and I waterskied in the bays of Long Island, and on the lakes in upstate New York. Before college, I designed and built a small boat and used it for saltwater fishing. Later on, married and with two young daughters my family moved to the Northwest. There we found a new passion: sailing. The four of us spent lots of time on the water, winter and summer, exploring the San Juan and the Gulf Islands. There we met other boat enthusiasts, both power and sail. Our daughters, now married with families of their own, tell us of the great memories they have of that time, enjoying the outdoors, learning to sail and fish, catching shrimp by the side of the dock, you name it. All good times.

One constant throughout this time on the water was respect for others. Each marina we visited had a "leave no wake" policy designed to protect boat owners and property owners from the damage caused by boats moving too fast and leaving large wakes. Such a policy is obvious. When you're in close quarters with other boats, large or small, no one wants to get bounced around from waves generated by someone else's carelessness. And for small boaters, canoers, paddle boarders, kayakers, people trying to fish or swim, these wakes are dangerous. Moreover, large boat wakes wreak havoc on shorelines, damage docks, disturb sediment and otherwise harm the environment.

Responsible boaters know all about this and act accordingly. Who would do otherwise? This is simple boating courtesy.

So, those were the old days when boat wakes were a consequence of boat speed. Now I've come to learn that boat manufacturers are purposefully designing boats to generate a big wake—apparently the bigger the better. Who knew? With these boats you can do wakeboarding, wakesurfing and get more air when waterskiing. Sounds like fun. Maybe I'll try it.

The problem is that a significant number of these big wake boat owners and operators don't act responsibly or practice simple boating courtesy. Hence the need for this proposed legislation.

Regardless of the boat's design purpose, boat wakes are still boat wakes and cause the same kind of disruption and damage if, in this case a heavily loaded wake boat, is improperly operated. Still, if waterskiing or surfing up and down a big wake is fun for people, I'm okay with it as long as they do it in a way that doesn't damage property or disrupt and possibly endanger the on-the-water experience for others.

Minimizing damage and disruption from the wakes produced by these big wake boats is what is needed now, and what this legislation is intended to do. It limits maximum loading weight of boats to 4000 pounds which limits wake size and damage/disruptive wave energy. It defines the range of wake boat operation where this sport can be enjoyed in an area large enough for dissipating large wakes. It adds an education requirement which hopefully will improve towed watersports operators' understanding of responsible boating. It provides a way of identifying boats of this class and moneys for managing a program necessary to achieve the objectives of the legislation.

Further, this legislation authorizes the State Marine Board to study the possible effects of increasing boat loading on the water ecology. The introduction of a water sport using new types of boats that purposefully generate unusually large wakes in a sensitive river environment is an essential precaution before the maximum loading weight is allowed to increase.

I urge you to pass this legislation. It is the right thing to do for the majority of people and property owners who want boating and other water sports on the Willamette River to be safe and sane for all.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Wallace", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

William A. Wallace