

Chair Witt, members of the committee, my name is Matthew York, and I'd like to submit testimony in opposition to HB 2725.

Our family has been enjoying boating and towed watersports on the upper Willamette for over 35 years. Throughout those years it has been a source of fun and recreation on one of our beautiful public waterways. The vast majority of people enjoying towed watersports on the upper Willamette do so in a safe and courteous manner. We have never experienced a dangerous or threatening situation on the water in this area. Further, this area of the river is already highly regulated. There are very specific areas where towed watersports can be enjoyed and education through the Oregon Marine board is required in order to engage in these activities. If there are issues with boaters not abiding by these rules the answer is more education and enforcement, not an arbitrary ban on certain sizes of watercraft engaging in the activity. 4000 lbs is an arbitrary number based on no real facts or evidence of the impact of watercraft below and above this number. Passing this legislation would deprive thousands of families of the opportunity to engage in safe, family friendly recreation in a primary public waterway. This at a time when maintaining safe outdoor recreation in public spaces is more critical than ever for maintaining mental health and the stability of our families and community because of the pandemic. These are the same families that have done this safely for years and paid the taxes to patrol and protect these waterways through the payment of boat registrations, and other fees. There are also numerous businesses in the area that count on this public waterway to be open for this type of recreation in order to maintain their business. This legislation goes too far and I believe better solutions can be found that address the concerns of riverfront homeowners that are supporting this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.