

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, my name is Jeff Feinblatt, I reside in Tualatin. I am presenting testimony in Opposition to House bill: 2725 and 2555. I am an orthopedic surgeon and an environmentalist. I see both sides of these bills, but for several reasons I am in opposition.

Something that was only peripherally mentioned in the testimony tonight, but that I see on a daily basis is both the upside of physical activity as well as the cost in terms of bodily injury. I see substantially more injuries from wake boarding and skiing (both can be done with a boat less than 4,000 lbs) than I see from wake surfing - the only activity that is really being curtailed by these 2 measures as it is the only activity that requires a boat of the size being discussed.

I appreciate the testimony that was provided this evening but in reference to shoreline erosion and damage to docks, but there already is an appropriate limitation of wake enhanced activity to areas that are wider and deeper and do not have docks. Any shoreline erosion should only occur in the area where these boats are used at low speed with ballast in an effort to displace water to create a wake. It will not occur upriver or downriver of where the boat is used in this manner. Therefore, property owners on the river should not have to worry about their docks or erosion from these boats as long as the laws already on the books are enforced.

I'm not sure what the actual impetus behind these 2 bills was, but it appears clear that environmental preservation of the river was not the primary consideration.

If we are truly trying to improve the environmental quality of the river, all motorized boats should be eliminated. In addition, attention should be turned toward restoration of riparian habitat and limitation of nitrogen and pesticide runoff from agriculture and other commercial activities. In addition, removal of any human -made alterations at the Willamette Falls would do more to restore river health than limiting a single boating activity by limiting boat weight.

Both bills comment that after passage of the bill, scientific study could be undertaken to see if the weight limit could be increased. Don't you believe that study should be undertaken prior to limiting the activities of your citizens?

I believe that towing activities have been sufficiently limited to areas of the Willamette that are appropriately wide, deep, and without adjacent docks. No further limitations are called for unless there is good scientific data suggesting that these limits will improve the health of the river more than any other intervention including restoration of riparian habitat and eliminating nitrogen and pesticide runoff.

I thank you for your time. Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Feinblatt