

HB 2725 & HB 2555 – Opposition Letter

Hello,

My name is Cameron Norris, and I am a current resident of Lake Oswego plus an avid user of the Willamette River. I am writing today in the hopes that the committee will take adequate time, and thought, before proposing any new legislation to limit access to the River. HB 2725 and HB have hastily been brought forth, without proper consideration, and are a continuation of existing limitations the OSMB has already enacted on this stretch of the river.

In recent years, the OSMB has passed three forms of limitations on the Newberg pool (No ballast in 2018, limiting surfing zones in 2019, and further adjustments to zones in 2020 plus requirement of towed watersports endorsement). I am in favor of the OSMB making changes over the past few years to help ensure the river is accessible by all in the community but passing a sweeping weight limit is too broad of a stroke. During the public hearing it was mentioned numerous times that 2/3 of the community that has the Towed Watersports endorsement currently, would no longer be able to access the endorsement if the bill passes. Numerous people last night made the argument that you can still wakeboard, ski, tube etc. with a boat less than 4,000 lbs., which is true. What they did not mention is that the boats operating on this stretch of the river are overwhelming more than 4,000 lbs. and this bill will eliminate the **majorities** ability to use the public waterway for recreation. This bill paints a broad stroke and will severely impact boat owner's ability to use the river, which is discriminatory.

As someone who follows the rules and uses the river more than most (I ride 3 days a week Monday-Friday and usually am on the river 1 day on the weekend) what is apparent, is that there is NO proper enforcement of the current rules the OSMB as placed by river police. The last few years I have seen countless boats operating without the Towed Watersports Endorsement, people not knowing which zones to properly recreate in and dangerous driving by all types of boat owners, without any adequate enforcement by the river patrol. As one of the bill sponsors mentioned, we cannot have people driving cars at 75 mph in a school zone, that is dangerous. What they failed to mention is that the speed limit is already 25 mph. but no one ENFORCES the current rules. I am asking the committee to not pass further limitations for the sake of doing it, rather to ask why the current rules are not being enforced and figure out how we can provide proper funding for the river patrol officers.

I love enjoying one of Oregon's great natural resources and want it to be thriving and safe. The weekends on the river are crazy when it is warm, and I would love to see proper enforcement of the current rules before adding more. Adding more limitations without enforcement, like what has happened the past three years, will not help solve any problems. Regardless of what was said, this bill is targeting a single activity, surfing. I estimate 90% of the wake boat owners primarily do this activity. OSMB has severely limited surfing already, and we need to focus on enforcement and educations before any additional limitations are brought forth. As a final note, I would encourage any members voting on this to spend time on the river during the week and throughout the year. For 9 months out of the year, the river is only used by a handful of people (rightfully so because it is cold!). The people in favor of this bill are focusing on maybe 12 weekends out of the year. That represents 24 days of 365.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my note and hope you take into consideration my thoughts. I can speak for a lot of water enthusiasts that change needs to happen, but this is not the right step in that direction.

- Cameron Norris