

Chair Witt and Committee members, I want to share my concerns regarding bills 2555 and 2725 and why I am firmly against them. My name is Paige Stoyer and I am a founding member of the Willamette River Community Coalition. We have been very engaged in these issues for the last few years, working to bring all users groups together to collaborate and reduce conflicts and to increase safety on the water.

I recently served on the 26 member Oregon State Marine Board rule committee which unanimously stated that what was needed was increased education and rule enforcement for both motorized and non-motorized users. Myself and another safety conscious Mom who paddles and boats with her kids went to Salem in March of 2020 to speak with Chair Witt about our concerns and to share how the lack of education and rule enforcement was causing problems on our waterways.

Unfortunately there has not been any investment in these critical needs and we saw an increase in accidents and deaths on the water last year but it was not attributed to boat wakes or any motorized users. OSMB Director Larry Warren stated that the increase was due mostly to non-motorized boaters not being properly prepared or having the proper skill set for the areas they were in. We continue to hope that the river community's request to improve education and enforcement will be answered, especially with increased education for novice paddlers and also with state-wide towed sports education, something we had asked for in 2019 instead of just the narrowly focused towed sports endorsement in the Newberg Pool.

Many of our river coalition members are homeowners and they strongly disagree with the claims of erosion and dock damage being caused by towed sports. Several years ago OSU professor Solomon Yim gave a presentation in which he stated that "A long term monitoring program (minimum of 1 year) would provide information on the magnitude of the different agents affecting the morphological evolution of the river margins." This is because there are so many factors and different agents both natural and human caused, including development on the banks, removal of native species and agriculture. Yim also wrote that "The intensity of the erosion produced by boat wakes can be considered as very small", and that when looking at the many different agents, "The scale and complexity of the problem prevents to have a single, definitive answer." Yet time and again we hear a small number of people trying to claim that there is a single and definitive answer, that they somehow just know it's just one type of boat (which are not even the biggest or heaviest boats on the river). We have asked for several years now why they won't do the studies these experts have said are needed, to actually understand all of the factors involved.

Dr. Stan Gregory also stated in a letter submitted to this committee that "Greater attention to this issue and studies to better inform decisions are needed...". I would ask again why aren't those studies being undertaken to do exactly that and better inform any decisions, especially before seeking to restrict public access to our waterways. One answer may be that many of the homeowners in our coalition have been told by experts that the increase in year round erosion is caused by the riverbanks being cleared of native species and developed. The refusal by proponents of these bills to do the required long-terms studies is likely rooted in the fact that

they are aware such studies would not support their claims or agenda and in fact might point to the fact that those few homeowners pushing for these bills in fact have greatly contributed to the erosion on the banks themselves.

My concern about the extreme and biased nature of these bills, and the lack of equity and inclusion in this process is reinforced looking at the first proposed amendment. That now suddenly seeks to expand the definition of the Newberg Pool to cover a 20 mile stretch from the Falls to the Yamhill river, over which the towed sports that so many of our families love to do would be completely banned, including wake boarding, wake surfing, foiling and even allowing paddlers to ride their stand up paddleboards on boats wakes, which many love to do.

In addition the proposed weight limit would ban 2 out of 3 families tow boats, including some purchased just last year after a 10,000 lbs weight limit was established. My family's much older 2006 tow boat would also be banned and we could not do any towed sports with the kids including tubing or waterskiing. Getting out on the river this past year has been one of the only activities we could do and it is not an overstatement to say that it provided much needed mental health benefits to all of us and an opportunity for the kids to get exercise when their other sports had all been cancelled.

I ask this committee to not approve these bills and to please consider instead working with the larger river community on the very urgent needs we have around increasing education and safety for all user groups and finding collaborative solutions that will protect equity in public access and recreation on our waterways. The answer is not to ban entire groups of users and push them to other places, which just increases congestion and creates safety issues. Thank you for your consideration.

Paige Stoyer