

Chair Witt and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2555 and HB 2725. My wife and I built a home in the City of Wilsonville four years ago. When we initially purchased the property, we were concerned about the condition of the riverbank due to the previous owners' lack of proper bank management.

My professional background is in commercial contracting and commercial real estate development. However, through my personal experience with riverbank restoration, erosion prevention it has become a passion. I want to help streamline the permitting process and help reduce erosion on Oregon's rivers so future generations can enjoy our natural resources.

To address the erosion concerns on my property, I needed to go through a complicated and expensive permitting process that took more than nine months. I was required to work with the Division of State Lands, the Army Core of Engineers, DEQ, the National Marine Fisheries Services (NOAA), the City of Wilsonville and ODFW. Additionally, I need to hire a surveyor, geotechnical engineer, wetland ecologists, civil engineers, and arborists.

The agencies and experts all agreed—the lack of vegetation and mismanagement of trees caused the bank erosion. The previous owners had cleared the native red twig dogwood plants and exposed the roots of the trees. As a result, the trees had broken loose and were hanging over the dock. The city gave us an emergency tree removal permit and advised us to get experts to save the rest of the trees and bank. In the following two winters of high waters, we lost 15 feet of riverbank—during the boating season, we did not lose any riverbank.

Throughout this process, I learned that the three biggest causes of human caused erosion are: clearing the bank of natural vegetation (red twig dogwood and willows), mismanagement of trees on the bank, and people not draining their properties correctly. Naturally, much of erosion occurs from rapid fluctuations of water levels. When water recedes too fast, the weight of the saturated riverbank soil is unsupported—this is why it is essential to maintain the native vegetation to help prevent erosion.

I urge you to vote no on both HB 2555 and HB 2725 until we have more information on both erosion and wake surfing. I have reviewed the studies presented in committee by Oregon State University and the other institutions and believe that inconclusive information is enough to make a decision that will have lasting impacts on Oregonians.

Tom Jones

Normal high water flooding which occurs once or twice a year.





