

I've had the pleasure and privilege of living on Willamette River in Auroras Road for 50 years now and have seen a lot. I and my family are petitioning to oppose HB 2725. I find the justification offered in support of the bill to be self-serving and inaccurate. The bill will limit access for a major user group which includes families and many children. This bill is nothing more than a couple special interest groups – paddle sports enthusiasts and non-boating waterfront homeowners wanting to have the river for their own uses only. The river is currently highly regulated and the reality is that watersports only happen on a small % of total days and hours out of an entire year.

Here are some numbers I'd ask you to consider:

- There are on average 65 days of weather in Portland where the average temperature is over 80 degrees.
- Weekend days account for 28% of total days of the year meaning that there are probably truly only about 18 busy summer days on the river
- Many of those days are weekdays where if there is water sports it's at a much reduced level (there are those super hot days that are the exceptions)
- On those days an estimate of activity for 6 hours out of those 65 days (I think that's a high estimate taking the weekdays into account) that's 390 hours out of the year or 4.4% of the entire year when there is a lot of water sports happening.
- That means the river is wide open to everyone else over 95% of the year.

As I sit here at my desk in COVID times – I have a view of the river. I have not seen a single boat engaging in watersports since early October.

It's true - the river gets busy in the summer. It's a public waterway and a place of recreation for many Oregonians. Also – erosion happens on the river. It's what rivers do. Floods are the major culprit by far. Usually flooding combines with an issue of human interference in the form of people clearcutting native vegetation from their banks to improve their views. We had occasional erosion issues on our property going back to the '70's and I'm sure before that all caused by seasonal flooding. We spend time and effort on a regular basis to maintain the bank, remove invasive species and encourage native plant growth to proactively prevent issues. Many of the same people who are petitioning in favor of this bill have cut trees, have banks covered in blackberries and blame it on the boating when their bank collapses. The worst erosion happens when the water level is at bank full (flood events) and the upper bank areas are saturated and compromised.

People who complain about dock damage are the same neighbors of mine who don't regularly maintain their docks. I have a standard allowable dock and have not had any damage other than flood damage that I can remember. I also spend time doing maintenance on the structure every year. Living on the river is a privilege and we must share this resource with multiple user groups while also doing our part to maintain our own personal property.

I do believe there is a need for ongoing education and enforcement. The biggest issues are caused by weekend warriors who don't know or won't abide by the rules. For the rest of us we'd be banning this: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/UW3mfuXDJZC5jHpk8> We spend time every year stopping people to chat with them about being a good neighbor and what the rules are. I have yet to see someone repeatedly break them once someone has had a chance to explain things to them.

Please don't turn the Newberg Pool – one of the few areas in all of Oregon's public waterways where towed watersports can be enjoyed by many in the metro area, turn into a private haven for a few people. This proposed legislation is complete overkill and uses false arguments for justification.

Thank you,
Tom & Angie Latta
15585 NE Eilers Road
Aurora, OR 97002