

While I can understand some property owners desire for less "wake" traffic if they believe this is the cause of erosion - I don't believe this is the cause, nor the proper solution (restricting towed watersports of boats in excess of 4,000lbs).

I grew up on the water, with "ski" boats - and would probably be unaffected by this restriction (my 1997 direct-drive Malibu doesn't have ballast and falls far short of 4,000lbs dry weight, but I have experience in operating a variety of tow and fishing boats) - so I consider myself fairly unbiased, and as such, I think I offer a unique perspective.

The problem of erosion and danger doesn't come from active, riding-wakes thrown by "wake" boats in a given stretch of river, but instead from boaters who are unaware or don't follow existing boating safety rules and operating procedures (both participating in towed watersports or not).

When a skier (or wakesurfer falls), how often do we see the driver jam the throttle down, and make an immediate right or left turn - throwing massive rollers in the opposite direction? (Answer: more times than not) This action is what leads to danger for other boaters, swimmers, SUPers, kayakers, etc. and leads to erosion of riverfront. Not only is this maneuver dangerous, it's essentially ineffective. By returning the throttle to an just above an idle, and immediately cutting the wheel, the boat turns more sharply, and at a safer, slower speed which allows it to more efficiently return to its downed rider - not to mention, it doesn't throw a large, repetitive wave in all directions.

Additionally, this action (max throttle, max wheel turn - sending large rollers) is equally used by boaters NOT participating in towed watersports, so this restriction will not prevent erosion and safety issues it is attempting to safeguard/protect against. Fishermen returning to the launch - or headed to their next location use this on an hourly basis. Jet boats (both fishing, pleasure, and Splash N Spin types) may be some of the most egregious users of similar throttle/wheel actions and pose significantly higher safety/erosion risks, as they don't have to worry about their own downed rider, and oftentimes overlook the safety of other boaters/river-users in their relative proximity.

This all goes without mentioning the cabin cruisers (and similar, large boats) that fly up/down our PDX-area rivers - seemingly oblivious to "No Wake Zones" and other safety areas throw wakes twice the size of "Wake" boats that this bill is attempting to restrict.

The solution to erosion and safety for all river-users is not to restrict towed watersports to certain sized boats, but instead to more effectively educate and practice safe boating procedures, and police reckless/unsafe boating - whether in relation to towed watersports or not.

If the goal of this bill is to provide safety and prevent erosion by limiting towed watersports to boats less than 4,000lbs, it will be ineffective. If the goal of this bill is to simply prevent towed watersports behind these such boats due to the personal interests of a select few, it will be effective and will be detrimental, not only economically, but to all those who use the river as a haven for outdoor, safe recreation.

We should take this time, effort, and funding that has gone into these bills (HB 2555 and HB 2725) to the education, and practice, of safe boating.