

March 12, 2021

I am neutral on HB2695. I do have some observations to share.

Currently the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) is comprised of a fishing guide, a paddle supports representative, a yacht / sailing representative, an active water sports representative, and a person with extensive general boating experience plus advocate for those with disabilities. As an observation, all of these members are associated with activities which pay a fee to the marine agency.

This bill proposes future voting board members shall be represented by the following 7 categories;

scientist with expertise in ecology, biology, or environmental conservation

floating home owner

recreational boating representative

paddle sports representative

fishing representative

Native American representative

one member of the public at large

Who will be representing personal watercraft, marinas, swimmers, and commercial operators (e.g. Portland Spirit, Willamette Jetboat Adventure)?

Since the board is filled with unpaid volunteers there exists the possibility the person filling the seat is a lobbyist or an attorney representing a particular activity or viewpoint. While I do not see that in the current board, I do see representatives with a definite bias who are attempting to "protect their turf." I suppose I should expect it if they are representing a specific activity.

The proposed bill wants to add 2 non-voting members who might represent DSL, DEQ, or a federal agency. These 2 members will be specific persons who may not be able to understand some of the complex problems facing the board and other times they may be unnecessary for the items being considered (e.g. if the board is discussing budget issues).

In observing the board the past 15 years, I have found it composed of 3 types of volunteers; The person who is engaged, attempts to understand the task before them and arrive at what they view to be a best fit solution.

The person who arrives with a bias and/or agenda and serves as the representative for protecting the interests of their group.

The not engaged and not interested individual who has been selected by the governor as a placeholder on the board.

Rather than trying to improve the board by increasing the quantity and not necessarily the quality, I think the public would be better served with a smaller group who are not linked to an activity. I think 3 smart persons who put in the research, ask the difficult questions, factor in the social side of conflicts which are arising, and consider long term impact could be an effective board. Since this is a volunteer position, it might be difficult to find people who want to do this since the board meets every 3 months

for day or two and some of the agenda items need more time to develop a good solution. This would frustrate the person trying to arrive at a good solution.

One problem I noticed with the board is how they address very complex problems such as the boat wake issue in the Newberg Pool. Their body of expertise appeared to come from public input and advice from the director of the marine agency. I did not see any involvement by the marine agency engineering staff, Oregon universities, or the Army Corp of Engineering. Some of the information being touted as "science-based" was flawed and/or distorted. The board needs to have access to their group of experts to verify the information being presented if it is going to be influencing their decisions. Even comments I heard by the board members were flawed when they were discussing the technical aspects of boat wakes and wake sports.

Hoping your actions lead to an improved marine board.

Regards,

Dale Mack

Aurora, OR