

Dear Chair Wagner and Committee Members:

Today I am writing you in support of SB 857. Over the past few years, motorized craft known as Wake Boats have grown in size and impact, today reaching the point where their very presence is problematic on a number of levels. A small group of motorized boaters, along with their industry's, lack of accountability and seek to divert attention from the impact of their craft.

As you know, right now out of state corporate funds are supporting a lobbying effort that distorts the truth, and seeks to dissuade legislators like you from taking any meaningful action to address their damaging craft. A few folks who can spend \$110k and up on a craft designed to generate surf waves on inland waters are affecting all others using our inland waters. Ironically they seek to call other river users "elites" because we have had it with their lack of understanding, and the tone-deafness of their entire industry.

Your support of SB 857 can:

Protect the Willamette River's nearshore habitat and species listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act.  
Protect numerous homeowners who have documented damage to their boats, their docks, and shorelines due to artificial wave action.

Protect all other river users who are subject to the whims of these boaters. Swimmers, power boaters, paddlers, and those who fish have been threatened by these craft and have experienced well-documented incidents with damage to their craft, or they have been swamped by the artificial waves.

This issue is real, and change is coming. It is occurring all over the United States where these craft are having a very real negative impact. By placing a weight limit for towed water sports boats, we protect the Willamette on this stretch, we protect private and public property, and we protect other river users.

This is not about more "education," which has been tried time and again. Now it is about action. I hope you will join in this effort that will create huge benefits for the river, and for the thousands of river users affected by wake boats.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ray Thomas