

Dear Chair Wagner and Committee Members:

I am writing you in support of SB 857. I have kayaked, power boated, and sailed on the Willamette river since I moved to Portland 1979. Over the past years a new type of power boat called a Wake Boat are showing up more prominently in the water craft usage mix. These boats are designed to generate a large wake that their towed passengers can play in. It looks like fun, but there is a problem in that these boats are too large for the Willamette River. The wakes they generate do not dissipate in the narrow confines of the Willamette like they do on larger, more appropriate bodies of water, but crash into the shore line disrupting the fisheries and undermining the banks, rocking house boats and docks, and sometimes impeding small craft like canoes, kayaks, and standup paddle boards.

Unfortunately, these wake boats seem to be get bigger with each generation and now come with added ballasts to generate ever larger waves. We need to help these boaters move off of the Willamette to more appropriate venues for their craft. I have no problem sharing the river with jet boats, and the Spirit of Portland, but these craft and their sport have a disproportionate negative impact and simply can not share the river with other uses. These is not an issue about attitudes or behavior, but simply one of physical limits. The Willamette River is just too narrow for these boats to use for their intended purposes.

Thank you for your consideration,
Richard Becker
Past President of the Oregon Oceans Paddling Society