

Dear Chair Wagner and Committee Members:

I am a long-time canoeist on the Willamette and other rivers within Oregon. I have twice canoed the entire distance from Eugene to Portland on the Willamette River with members of my family. I support Senate Bill 857. Wake boats have grown in size and impact so much so they now threaten and damage our aquatic ecosystems, damage property along Oregon's major waterways, and intimidate other river users. I wish you could feel the anxiety I have felt when one of these wake boats makes a turn near my canoe.

A tiny group of motorized boaters who support Wake boats is seeking to divert attention from the impact of their boats, while out-of-state corporate funds are supporting a lobbying effort that distorts the truth and seeks to prevent meaningful action by the legislature. Wake boats are designed to generate huge artificial surf waves on inland waters. These waves are eroding shorelines, damaging docks, causing poor water quality, and intimidating other river users. Ironically they seek to call the majority of river users like me "elites" because we have the interests of the many in mind, while they and their entire industry have shown a clear lack of understanding of their impact on the river and on other river users.

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 urgent. These craft are having a very real negative impact across the US. By placing a weight limit on towed water sports boats, we will protect habitat along this stretch of the Willamette, we will protect private and public property, and we will protect other river users.

Education has been tried time and time again. This time we need to take action. Please join me in this effort to protect the Willamette River for wildlife and all river users.

Thank you,

Joseph Blowers  
Molalla, OR