

I am submitting testimony to oppose SB 857. This legislation is born out of special interest agendas and is not representative of the community at large.

I've been an avid river user on this river since the day I was born in the Summer of 1970, my parents, sister, and myself along with family friends spent every weekend on these waters when I was growing up. I have continued the tradition with my own family that has landed one of my sons in the water sport industry. Being out on the water isn't just for recreation, its a lifestyle, its just a way of being. The boating and river community is a strong and thoughtful community that takes this Bill seriously as its attempting to impact our lifestyles and that of our children. Boating is a family friendly, wholesome activity, its the time when you can actually get your teens to spend time with you. The lower Willamette down below the Fremont bridge is not a safe area, its dirty, has large boat river traffic, there are not any boat ramps near that I would choose to take my family to. The ramps nearby are filled with the homeless population. The upper Willamette is a special place, I think we can all agree, more education for all on how to safely navigate it is reasonable. I once saw a swimmer with a follower boat swimming up the river near a channel marker, is that safe? Was it me in my wakeboat not being safe or was it the uneducated swimmer in a dangerous spot. Like a runner running down the middle of the freeway. Same with kayakers, I've seen them cut in front of boats while they are slowly underpower heading towards the ramp to their trailers. More education for all is needed.

Our waterway policies should be grounded in solid research and favor the general public, not select waterfront homeowners and paddlers looking to eliminate motorized boating for their own personal gain. Real studies should be conducted to determine the best ways to keep the river safe and healthy. Furthermore, the Newberg Pool is already one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon, and wake surfing is only allowed in two small zones with no adjacent homes.

This bill will make our waterways less safe and negatively impact Oregon families and small businesses. The House already extensively debated this bill and did not move forward. I respectfully urge you to do the same. Oregon needs our senators focused on COVID, economic recovery and getting our kids back in school. Please do not waste time on this unnecessary legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brad Smith