

Dear Chair Wagner and Committee Members:

I am writing you in support of SB 857. I have kayaked and swum the Willamette River for the last 9 years, and in the course of that time, the usage, size, and impact of weight boats has steadily increased, to the detriment of the river ecology and the ability of other users to access and enjoy the river safely.

A small group of motorized boaters seek to divert attention from the impact of their craft, while out-of-state corporate funds are supporting a lobbying effort that distorts the truth and seeks to dissuade legislators from taking meaningful action to address these damaging craft. Ironically, this small minority of river users who can spend \$110,000 on wake boats routinely insult all other river users as "elites", as if wanting to protect river wildlife and be able to paddle without getting smashed against rocks by passing boats is some sort of intellectual horror. There are places along the river where the use of wake boats can be less damaging to the habitat, based on historic flows in the Willamette, and restrictions such as those proposed in SB 857 can provide multiple benefits to people, wildlife, and property.

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, docks, and shorelines due to artificial large 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 experienced well-documented incidents with damage to their craft, or they have been swamped by the artificial waves. I myself have had more than one incident where I have paddled frantically to get to shore while watching a wake boat driver glaring at me and clearly coming as close as possible in an attempt to swamp me. Luckily, I'm an experienced paddler, but there are a great many novice boaters and SUP-ers out there who would be utterly unable to cope with this kind of wake encounter.

This issue is real, and is occurring all over the US where these craft are having a very real negative impact. By placing a weight limit for towed water sports boats, we protect the Willamette, private and public property, other river users, and sensitive wildlife. 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 a minority of wake boat users.

Thank you for your consideration.