

June 1, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Rules

I wish to express **my concern and opposition** to further restrictions being implemented on the Willamette River as prescribed by SB 857.

Respectfully, I believe that it is important for me to provide you some perspective if you are tasked with imposing rules that will change the quality of life for thousands of people currently enjoying the Newberg Pool, particularly for those of us that live and recreate on this section of the Willamette.

Over the past several years many pleasure boaters that enjoy wakeboarding and wake surfing have adhered to the imposed requirements to travel a significant number of miles round trip to get to a designated "surf zone" to participate in their desired sport. That same boater has been required to take, pass, and pay for a Towed Water Sports Education Program above and beyond the Oregon State Boaters License that canoe, kayak and paddle boarders using the waterway are NOT required to take. These courses and endorsements come with additional fees for pleasure boaters to lawfully operate their boats. Should the boat owner personally wish to get in the water and participate in the sport, the person then taking the helm is also required to study, pass, and pay for the additional educational programs. A family of 4 incur an additional expense of \$240 every 2 years for the right to participate in these watersports above and beyond the time and expense involved in acquiring an Oregon Boater's license.

The proposed changes in this bill will eliminate the ability to legally engage in towed watersports for many pleasure boats on the Willamette River with the immediate proposed weight limit of 4,000 lbs.

Those of us that engaged in towed watersports in the Newberg Pool are inarguably the most financially invested and educated recreational boater on the river. We must take more steps through education to boat on the river, and we certainly must pay more money to utilize the same public waterway given access to non-power boaters without the burden of this expense. Yet, SB 857 will eliminate this sport for our families if we own vessels that weigh more than 4,000 lbs.

As a lifelong Oregonian, my family and I value the great resources our State has to offer and are avid outdoors people as I believe most people are who engage in towed watersports. The notion that we operate our vessels in a manner to harm our riverbanks, fish habitats, and natural beauty of our waterways is completely counterintuitive. We have a right to use public waterways like every other river user. Along with that right we understand the need for responsible use of our vessels. **Towed water sports enthusiasts work hard to follow the rules.** Now, these bills seek to change the rules once again before any concrete scientific evidence is presented to prove our sport is harming our waterways? That is nonsense!

Instead of imposing laws that are not based in fact, I would suggest this bill be amended like HB 2725-6 by Rep. Breese-Iverson that brings some logic into the equation.

Additionally, why don't we focus on enforcing the laws that already exist by increasing enforcement? I have personally witnessed boaters in the Newberg pool who clearly do not have towed watersports endorsements and ARE NOT following existing laws.

We (power boaters wishing to responsibly recreate on the river) have jumped through every "hoop" required to enjoy the use of our public waterway; and now there is yet another request to strip our freedom to enjoy the river. I am respectfully requesting that you REJECT THIS BILL and spare us of further regulation and restriction.

Chris Miller

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