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Regarding SB857-1

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to urge you to pass SB857-1.

I written in the past with a clear request that boats, which have the purpose of producing large wakes for recreational purposes, be eliminated from the Willamette River. Some years ago this would have seemed to me to be an extreme position, when most interested parties were trying to understand the problem. Now, this is the only reasonable approach to the problems caused by these boats. It is time to do the difficult and challenging work of directing these boats to suitable waterways. The Willamette River is not one of them, primarily because of its size, and the nature of the soil composition of its banks.

I have been a resident in Butteville, living on the Willamette River for over 40 years. This river is a treasure that deserves the full protection of its natural state as envisioned in the Willamette River Greenway act. “The *qualities* of the Willamette River shall be protected, conserved, enhanced and maintained consistent with the lawful uses present on December 6, 1975.” C.3.b. “Recreation . The possibility that public recreation use might disturb adjacent property shall be considered and minimized to the greatest extent practicable.” “C.3.c. Fish and wildlife habitat- Significant fish and wildlife habitats shall be protected;” “ C.3.g. Vegetative fringe--The natural vegetative fringe along the River shall be enhanced and protected to the *maximum extent practicable*.”

Over the decades I have observed two undesired changes that are contrary to this act: trees and vegetation are cleared for urban style landscaping, and secondly, transformation in pleasure 1

boating. Heavy boat traffic is not new. Water skiing was popular. Many water skiing boats were designed to minimize wakes. What is new, are wake making, deep V hull designs with the capacity for heavy loads in the stern of these boats. *The intentional making of wakes by boats for recreational purposes is a new use of the Willamette River.*

*Nothing in nature makes waves that break against the shoreline like these wake boats do.* Breaking waves pound against the shore undercutting the bank and causing erosion. I have lost several feet of one section of our bank. When wake boats are active, water turbidity increases dramatically. I tested water quality for Willamette River Keepers monthly for several years at three sites in and near Willamette Mission State Park. One test was for water turbidity. Compared to the relatively clear water upstream, the turbidity in our area caused by wake boats is shocking. The water is muddy and opaque near the shoreline from bank erosion. That is a different phenomenon from the normal silting that occurs during the winter high water. That silt gradually moves away from the shoreline during the low water summer months and the water clears. For the first time, water weeds are growing in shallow areas near our banks. This is clear evidence that the ecology of the river bottom is changing in part, due to the excess of soil being washed into the river. I leave to the biologists to detail the damage done to this ecosystem and the consequences for micronutrients and fish habitat.

The height of wake boat waves drives Great Blue Herons out of the area. Even if they could tolerate the activity of boats, the waves make it impossible for them to wade and feed. A Blue Heron rookery down river from our place is gone. I haven't seen a Green Heron here in years. It doesn't help that these boats usually have external speakers and commonly are powered to high volumes to overcome engine noise. These boaters seem to be unaware of how sound travels on the water and how obnoxious this is to these birds as well as people on or around the river. The effect is to diminish enjoyment of the natural beauty of the river.

Other concerns are the effects of these waves slamming against the structure of a dock. The period, or distance between waves, makes the dock pitch wildly, making it difficult to stand up on it (our dock is small). In addition, the combinations of waves from circling boats, can compound the height of the waves. These large waves also are a hazard for inexperienced people in paddle boats. I have been unable to moor my own small outboard motor boat to the dock. The violent pitching of the dock causes the boat and dock to pound against each other, causing damage.

On a personal note, our children were fortunate to have the opportunity to grow up learning the pleasures of messing around with small boats on the river. They imprinted on the beauty of the

river and learned something about observing nature. They learned about the practical satisfactions of making things that float, like kayaks. They learned about the joy to stuff ratio (Joy/Stuff). They passed these values on to their children. As a child and adolescent psychiatrist, I doubt that the youth who are restricted from wake boating on the Willamette will be seriously harmed by it. Better, however, that they and their friends and family take advantage of this river in small boats. As old photographs document, that is what thousands of children and families from all walks of life did in the past. This wasn't recreation for only the very wealthy with expensive boats. They can put in and take out at our newly developing Historic Butteville Landing dock in Butteville. Hopefully, we will complete the funding and construction this summer.

This is not a novel situation, with the introduction of a new product, wake boating, which develop enthusiastic consumers, but turns out to have negative consequences. I understand that opposition to them is not limited to the U.S. This happens all the time. The process of articulating citizen opposition and advocating for public interests, however, is difficult and often weak in comparison to industry resources. The lobbying forces lined up to oppose what is needed in terms of regulating wake boats are well financed and generous in their support of legislators who will carry water for them.

I support redirecting recreational wake boats to large bodies of water where wave activity is not harmful to the shoreline. Now is the time for the legislature to take this action.

Sincerely,

Richard Angell, M.D.