

Dear Senator's,

As you know new legislation to ban power boating on the Willamette River is now before the Oregon Senate in the form of SB 857. This bill, in conjunction with HB 2725, 2695 and 2734, is born out of special interest agendas and I strongly feel it fails to represent the community at large. My family of 6 is new to the boating community and has quickly grown to love watersports. We started paddle boarding and kayaking, and now own a ski boat for wakeboarding and wake surfing. Three weekends ago, I watched my 13-year-old son, who has never been up on any type of board or waterski, not only wakeboard, but also wake surf without holding a tow rope. This huge self-confidence boost is exactly what he needed after being separated from his small social network at school because of Covid. Even when school was open, he had very few friends and has some difficulty dealing with social situations.

I can understand some of the concerns in areas where the river is narrow, but outright banning just seems wrong. We spent 12 hours over the 3-day Memorial weekend on the section of river just South of the Tualatin inlet to the top of Willamette Falls. This section is both wide and deep, with only a handful of floating homes near the falls. This stretch of river should definitely be an area that wake surfing is allowed. Now that there is an outright ban on the lower Willamette up to the Hawthorne Bridge, there is really no place else to go. I have no problem slowing down when near paddleboards/kayaks, especially since most aren't wearing life jackets, but this is a public river and my tax dollars help support it.

Reasonable Alternatives that Could, and Should, be Considered:

- 1.Zones for power or paddler only.
- 2.Time restrictions when certain sports aren't allowed (i.e., wake surfing 12pm to 5pm M-F, 10am-3pm S/S, or some reasonable alternative).
- 3.Increase education requirements for all Willamette waterway users.
- 4.Increase registration fees for all users to allow for additional enforcement patrols.

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.

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 safely back in school. Please do not waste more time on this unnecessary legislation.

Best Regards,

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