

Testimony to Senate Rules Committee Re SB 857

To: Senate Rules Committee
From: John Weigant, Futurist and Climate Activist
Date: June 2, 2021
Subj: Proposed amendment to SB 857

1. Section 3 of the act enables the State Marine Board to conduct a study regarding adverse impacts of increasing the maximum loading weight of boats under ORS 830.643. Add a subsection:

(1)(d) Have an adverse effect on Oregon's future climate.
2. Because Section 3 specifies that study findings will be based on solid science, the outcome of subsections 3(1)(d) has already been determined:
3. The purpose of wake boats is to make the biggest wake possible to maximize surfing fun. Such waves have energy. The source of the energy is fossil fuel. The physics law of conservation of energy says energy cannot be created, but only changed in form. In this case, the chemical energy stored in fossil fuel is converted to wave energy whose local impact is a wave big enough to surf on (the bigger the better), plus CO₂ pollution that acidifies the water and warms the climate. Wake-boarders are interested only in an immediate wave large enough to surf on, but water is an extremely efficient wave transmission medium whose impact extends not only to surrounding shorelines and floating structures but also nearby boats. Many such boats are human-powered (i.e., carbon-free) and not particularly stable, causing capsizing hazard to novice boaters.
4. Motorboats using fossil fuel exacerbate climate change, and the State Marine Board (OSMB) has wide responsibility to regulate boating for the best interests of all Oregonians. The state has a goal of zero carbon by 2040, which cannot be met by encouraging boats whose intent is to use fossil fuel to maximize power and fun. A good portion of OSMB's revenue is from taxes on marine motor fuel, but that's a fraction of total fuel used, since many motorboats use highway fuel. OSMB recently added taxes on human-powered boats over 10 feet in length, violating the Act of Congress of 1859 admitting Oregon to the Union (printed in the *Oregon Blue Book* just before the Constitution). It also charges sailboats the same registration fees as motorboats, even though their principal "fuel" is wind, which is sustainable. Adding subsection 3(1)(d) would increase OSMB's awareness of their climate impact. (OSMB wasn't mentioned in the Governor's Executive Order 20-04.)
5. Another requirement of the future is greater equality among residents. Wake boats are expensive. About a year ago I searched Craigslist for "wakeboats ballast" to identify wakeboats. I found a dozen, ranging in price from about \$50,000 to \$150,000 with an average price of just over \$100,000. All were displayed on 3-axel trailers, which would require heavy vehicles to tow. I have little sympathy with boat owners who have so much wealth they can selfishly use it to damage other quiet users of the water.