

I'm writing to you from Minnesota regarding Oregon Bill SB857A. Minnesotans love our lakes and rivers and, like Oregonians, we are also concerned about towed watersports that require large enhanced wakes to facilitate wakeboarding and wakesurfing. Our two States are not alone as our concerns are shared virtually anywhere enhanced wake watersports exist.

Whether you call these motorboats wake boats, wake board boats, wakesurf boats, ballast boats or Enhanced Wake Watercraft (EWW), they are a unique and specialized type of recreational motorboat where every element of the design and technology is engineered with the goal of creating massive wakes to support the towed watersports of wake boarding and wakesurfing.

Consider the following testimony at a Minnesota State Senate Environment Committee Hearing last March: "I think the most important factor is how the boat is operated. Almost any boat of any size can be operated in a way to make a big wave. We know the effect of starting off with the boat, as you get just before planing speed, generally that is where it can make its biggest impact. But that aside, to some extent, the bigger the boat, the more its displacement, the higher the horsepower, the more wave it is capable of making." This testimony was from Clifford Goudey, the consultant hired by the Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA) to conduct their 2015 Wake Study

Now consider the typical specs for factory designed wake boats: dry weights ranging from 4,000 pounds to over 7,000 pounds; ballast capacity ranging from 1600 pounds to 6,000 pounds; and engines ranging from 300 hp to 600 hp. Fully loaded with passengers and gas, some of these boats can exceed 15,000 pounds gross weight.

Consider also that his testimony describes virtually any wake boat in wakesurfing mode, plowing through the water at about 10 mph with the stern pushed down and with the bow up, never attaining planing speed. This is not a case of the boat being operated irresponsibly but of the boat being operated exactly as designed.

I'm sure you're seeing significant opposition to SB857A, and I'm sure this opposition is being financed and directed primarily by the WSIA whose Mission Statement is: "To promote and protect all towed water sports activity." They are not shy about using any tactics available to protect the interests of their constituents.

My understanding of the Newberg Pool is that this stretch of the Willamette River is relatively placid and quite narrow, with most areas less than 580' wide. I can't think of a water body more in need of protection from towed watersports requiring very heavy motorboats, especially those capable of adding significantly more ballast weight, and having very high horsepower engines. SB857A will help to protect this resource while still allowing water recreation that does not impair water quality, erode the shore and put other users' safety at high risk. Please vote in favor of SB857A.