

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chair Drazen and Committee Members -

I want to personally thank you for taking up this bill so late in the session. There is obviously a lot going on and we appreciate your attention to this important matter. At the same time there are very good reasons why support for SB 857 is so strong.

I grew up on the Willamette River, and have worked for the river's health for over 20 years. The Willamette is beset significant issues that need to be addressed. Unfortunately, a newer issue has come to the fore that really needs attention - wake boats. In essence, these machines that are designed to create artificial waves on inland waters are having real negative impacts across the board.

These are not ski boats, or fishing boats, or cabin cruisers. Instead, they are the result of a specialized industry, that creates specialized craft with the goal of allowing people to "surf" on inland waterways. These specialized machines have grown in size and impact over the past ten years to the point where they impact everyone else on a given waterway where they are present - especially on rivers. Those who fish have issues with these machines. Those who swim have safety issues related to them. People simply paddling a canoe, kayak, or SUP have issues staying upright when faced with the frequent large artificial waves generated by "wake boats."

I grew up in Milwaukie, OR, and as a kid we never had to deal with "wake boats" when canoeing in my neighbor's old aluminum canoe on the Willamette or any other waterway. We never had to seek refuge from such craft when swimming anywhere along the river as high school kids. Today, the situation is different.

At the end of the day, this issue has to be dealt with. You all have an opportunity to make a difference here. The issue is nationwide, and there is good reason people in dozens of states have said, "enough"!

Unfortunately, boats specifically designed to generate artificial waves upon which to surf create big problems. We need to limit these on the Willamette River for the health of the river, the safety of other river users, and to protect destruction of both public and private property.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to Oregon.

Sincerely,

Travis Williams