

## **SB 857 Rules Committee Testimony**

**Rep. Sheri Schouten**

**June 24, 2021**

Thank you, Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Drazan and Holvey, members of the committee.

For the record my name is Sheri Schouten, State Representative for District 27 which encompasses Beaverton and Southwest Portland.

Colleagues, I'm here before you today in support of SB 857.

Some of you know that my family and I own a 19-foot Yamaha AR190 speedboat. I want to be clear up front that nothing in this bill will impact my family's ability to enjoy the Newberg pool, nor will it impact the vast majority of boaters who operate typical ski boats.

Our boat weighs about 2,500 pounds empty. Even with fuel and passengers aboard it tops out around 4,200 pounds; well under the 5,000-pounds-empty cap established in this bill.

Our size boat is extremely common, since it's essentially the largest watercraft that can fit inside a standard garage. All these vessels remain eligible to obtain the Newberg Pool certificate and tow skiers, wakeboarders, and tubers to their hearts' content.

Traditionally, boatmakers have tried to make their craft as light as possible. The goal is to get the craft up "on plane" above the water to reduce drag and achieve high speeds. All motorboats will create a wake, but this was historically seen as an unavoidable side-effect, not the entire goal of the boat. It's a simple matter of physics—any energy that goes into disrupting the water's surface is wasted energy that doesn't move the boat forward.

By contrast the new giant wake boats can weigh three tons or more empty. They have incredibly powerful engines that allow them to achieve the same speeds as traditional boats--not by going up on plane, but by plowing straight through the water. From a traditional boating perspective this is a massive waste of energy, which radiates outward in the form of extremely powerful waves. Creating those waves is the whole point of owning a behemoth wake boat. It's literally in the name.

And it's these powerful waves which are the problem this bill seeks to address.

Colleagues, some of you may have seen my Facebook post a few weeks back about fishing a jet-skier out of the Willamette River in downtown Portland. This gentleman had been capsized by the wave from a giant wake boat. His engine flooded and he was dead in the water. And that was in a part of the river that is wider and deeper than most of the Newberg Pool.

Similarly, many of you know my Chief of Staff, Kyle Linhares. He and his wife canoe on the Willamette and have been swamped or nearly swamped several times by waves emanating from large wake boats.

And colleagues, while motorboat wakes are not the only thing causing bank erosion along the Willamette, the presence of ocean-sized waves on historically calm waterways certainly contributes—unnecessarily, in my opinion—to undercutting the shoreline.

Simply put, Madame Chair, oversize wake boats do not play nicely with other users either on or alongside the Willamette River. the narrow and ecologically sensitive Newberg Pool is simply not the place for them.

Again, I want to emphasize that SB 857 will not impact the vast majority of boaters in Oregon or eliminate towed watersports on the Newberg pool.

The relatively few oversize boats are welcome to explore other, wider bodies of water around the state. But for the tens of thousands of ordinary ski boats around the state, including mine and probably including yours, this bill has no impact whatsoever.

Colleagues, I urge an “Aye” vote. Thank you.