

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to ask that you oppose SB 857. This exact bill was previously in the House and it was viewed so poorly that it never made it out of committee. This bill seeks to make the Willamette River in the Newberg pool a private water way for a few homeowners and does its best to remove the large majority of motorized boats. Those in favor of the bill will tell you that it's not a bill to ban boats, but that is not true. In its current form any boat over 5000lbs will be outlawed. Has anyone from either the Senate or the House worked with boat dealers and boating community to know what percentage of boats sold in the last 5 years would fall below this number? It's high in case you were wondering. Additionally, why was 5000lbs chosen? What makes a 5000lb boat safe and a 6000lb or 8000lb boat not safe? Before legislation is passed shouldn't there be studies showing the effect of the wake of a boat at differing weights? The reason this evidence is not being presented is because it doesn't exist. It is an arbitrary number meant to remove as many boats and boaters as possible.

Those in favor of this bill will claim erosion, environmental hazard and many other false claims. This group has been trying to pass this ban of boating for over 10 years. If their claims were true this past decade should have been ample time to conduct multiple, extensive studies to support their claim. Instead they provide powerpoint presentations with photos taken from an iPhone as scientific evidence to support their claims. Before closing a river to 1000's of users I would think there should be a study from OSU, the Oregon State Marine Board, the Army Corps of Engineers, something that would provide real, factual data, not iPhone pictures.

This section of the Willamette is used from mid June to late August. That is 10 weekends a year. As someone who frequents this section of the river and has multiple friends that have homes on the water, I have seen the river be very busy. But it is truly limited to Saturdays and Sundays. To claim that the river is being ruined by 20 days (at most) a year with no scientific studies or data to back it up is simply not true. The other 340 days a year the river is calm. Maybe the fact that we get over 30" of rain a year and the river bank can rise and fall 10-15 feet during rain storms has something to do with the river bank changes. Maybe the river bank changes because that's what rivers do, they erode, wash out, change paths. That's just basic science.

Representatives, I ask you to please vote no on SB 857. This bill will remove boating from the river and greatly impact families like mine. I have countless memories on this river with my children. I hope one day they have the same opportunity and this bill will take that chance from them. If there is great risk to the river we should absolutely address that, but let's get facts and real data, not iPhone photos and opinions. Then let's all work together that provides a solution for as many as possible. Not just a few homeowners who want to make the Willamette their private waterway.

Best Regards,

Bryan Wiepert