

Dear Chair Smith Warner and Committee Members -

Today Rep. Meek submitted a -11 amendment that calls for a study before any action. Frankly, this is unfortunate. The Willamette River has been studied to death. The same riverine biological principles apply in multiple places, from one river system to another. It absolutely not necessitate yet another study to determine that artificial 4ft waves have an impact on the shorelines during the low flow season. As you know, there are other negative impacts from wake boats as well as the ecological.

Erosion is natural, but not the kind of erosion we see during the Spring and Summer months from Wake Boats. This is an easy, fundamental distinction between what folks from wake boat community have been saying, and everyone else. The issue is that the nearshore area, the most biologically productive in any river system, gets hammered by the unnatural waves. From the smallest micro invertebrates, to juvenile wild fish - when the waves roll in, sediment is stewed up, and everything moves in a dramatic fashion to the detriment of a stable system. All of this is occurring in a water way where tens of millions of dollars have been spent to help recover wild spring chinook, and wild winter steelhead.

Let's not let ourselves get stranded on arguments that miss the point. Boats are being specifically designed to import Coastal type "surfing" to inland waters. Their craft weigh literally thousands and thousands of pounds in order to sit deep in the water, so when they plow forward at low speeds, a giant surf wave is created. This is not in keeping with what the Willamette needs. There is a reason that Willamette Riverkeeper filed a 60-day notice to sue the Marine Board under the Federal ESA. We have been holding off due to some promising signs at the Marine Board, and in your legislative body.

Thanks for your additional consideration and your service to Oregon.

Travis Williams
Riverkeeper & Executive Director
Willamette Riverkeeper