

Dear Senators,

I oppose SB 857 and ask you to consider the facts and identify we do not have the information needed to exclude towed sports. Throughout this process I have been dismayed that we might discuss possible solutions for great issues, such as erosion and fish health, and without true research based upon our river, we are choosing to hand pick one thing to be responsible for such grave issues: Boat sports.

I realize boats have grown in size over the year, this is true for all boats, not just sport boats. In order to identify the proper size of a boat that might affect our environment, we'd need to identify via research what the difference could be between a 4,000 lb boat and a 8,000 lb boat on the Upper and Lower. As you are aware, the Marine Board had recently put the limit at 10,000 lbs. Why has the Senate chosen 4,000 or 5,000 lbs? There is no research. If we have no research, why are we excluding segments of the public?

The other concerning part of this bill is that why is it only boats that are doing boat sports that this is for? All boats make waves and wakes, and the larger boats have large and greater wakes, but they are not included in this solution. We are supposed to reduce erosion by only eliminating boat sports but not all boat wakes? This is the same river that sees commercial, barges, cruisers and large format boats. If the Locks should open, they will send these down river.

Beside the unfairness that ALL boat sports are being targeted, we still are not addressing the true issues on the river when it comes to motorized boats, including law enforcement. To change behavior on the river, there need enforcement.

I've heard from some that this bill is only to get the big, bad surfing off the river. But please note, this affects all boat sports. Anyone wanting to tube, can't use a boat over 5,000 lbs. A majority of the sport boats made today are over this amount. The Marine Board also testified earlier that the average weight on the Upper is just over 5,000 lbs so we are excluding nearly half of our public, based on no research.

I've heard our government speak to the "expert opinions" that were presented in the House originally under Rep. Witt's bill. These were the same experts that said only two years earlier that actual research and more research needs to be done to identify the impact. Yet without actual research, these same educational experts, concluded that wakes are responsible which is questionable and not grounded in onsite specific research.

The amount of misinformation and lack of research is concerning, especially when it comes to exclusion. I ask the Senate to be diligent in opposing this bill because it does not have the appropriate research on erosion, fish or true impact to exclude the public on our public waterway.

Thank you,
Erin Patterson