

Submitter: Austen Rustrum

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

My name is Austen and my family and I are residents of Wilsonville. On behalf of my family and the community of families of recreational boat owners that enjoy the affected section of the river, I would like to join the overwhelming chorus of opposition against this measure.

The reason for my opposition is simple: more research is needed before determining a course of action.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Bert Krages for his research thus far on the environmental impact. I read through all the written testimony submitted thus far to try to get a better understanding behind the drive to implement such restrictions. Although he stands alone in supporting this measure (out of 18 submissions thus far, not including my own), he provided by far the most thorough and scientific response to back his opinion. His response helped me understand some of the environmental concerns that supporters of this measure may have.

Still, I am left with many questions...

Wake surfing seems to be the main target of this legislation and it is already highly regulated, with surf zones restricted to only areas that are devoid of docks and other structures. For 2 remaining sections where it is allowed, the main concern for supporters of this measure seems to be around ecological impact. Here are a few questions that I do not feel have not been adequately researched:

- For the areas that do still allow wake surfing, what is the total land mass that has been lost within these areas that can be directly attributed increased size in boat wakes?
- What are the projected mitigating effects of the heavy vegetation that surrounds the banks of the river in these areas over the long term?
- Assuming the projected long-term effects are known and would cause significant harm in the form of lost farmland or reduced fish populations, what other options have been explored besides limiting wake boat activity? For example, increasing the already abundant natural vegetation, soil erosion mats, coir logs, geotextiles, tree revetment, and gabions, to name a few...
- What is the projected impact to fish populations? ODF numbers seem to indicate they are stable and/or increasing:

https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/fish_counts/willamette/annual_counts_1961_2021.pdf

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- How would this measure impact congestion at other nearby bodies of water, such as Hagg Lake? How significant is this safety issue and would it lead to increased boating incidents?

From what I can understand, the main argument in support of this measure boils down to:

- Heavy boats make big wakes
- Big wakes cause erosion
- Erosion is bad
- Therefore, we should ban big boats from the river

I don't think anyone can argue that boats these days make big wakes - indeed, that's desirable from a recreational point of view. Similarly, I don't think anyone will argue that bigger waves have the ability to contribute to erosion. However, before jumping the gun and declaring that heavy boats inexorably bad and should therefore be banned, more should be done to understand the long-term significance of any impacts as well as alternative solutions that do not involve penalizing numerous families and business owners. We all love the river, too, and wish to be permitted to enjoy it with everyone else. It would be unfair to consider this supporting this measure when alternative solutions have not been adequately considered and long-term impacts are not well understood.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts on this matter and I hope you all will join me in opposing this measure.