

Submitter: Colin Meskell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

I support the 5000 pound limit for boats to obtain a towed watersports certificate, to include boats that use water ballast tanks to increase the weight of the boat above 5000 lbs.

The proliferation of boats that are designed to generate large wakes in recent years has made the waters of the State much less usable for other watersport and waterplay activities. Along the Willamette river these boats cause wakes that are disruptive to other users of the river whether currently actively towing surfers or not. I have often seen and experienced the need to cease or modify one's activity on the river when a ballasted boat approaches to ensure the safety of the personnel and watercraft that one is operating. Waterskiers will often drop their towrope before hitting these large wakes, stand-up paddleboarders will drop to their knees, fishers will sit down in their boats from a standing position, and kayakers will stop their forward progress in order to turn their craft into the wakes to prevent capsizing. I have even witnessed the sheriff's boat having to rapidly cut power and speed in order to safely cross these large waves. It is often stated by those who have opposed restrictions on boat sizes that ordinances should not restrict one's use of the river in favor of another's. However, when the chosen activity of one user of the river affects all of the other users' safety and enjoyment of the river, then those activities should be regulated.