

Submitter: Michael Di Bonaventura

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

Being a homeowner on the upper Willamette River, I see boats of all kinds come down the water ways. My hillside has not been affected by wakeboarders or surfers coming by, what has affected my hillside is that in winter the water rises 20 - 30 ft causing erosion not the boats that are on the water for 3 months out of the year. If this passes it will be one of the biggest mistakes in Oregon history, we should be focusing on the trash that is being dumped into the river by companies and by the homeless population. We should be focusing on the COVID recovery, rebuilding the 20+ percent of businesses that have left downtown, we should be rebuilding the police, fire and health departments to have the right staffing available. We should be focused on rebuilding the cities in our state. This is a distraction from the real issues going on in this state.

SB 1589 will strip safe, socially distant outdoor opportunities for hundreds of families along the Newberg Pool and impact local small businesses who depend on their support.

Residential development, not boat wakes, is the primary human-caused source of erosion. There is broad agreement that the lack of native vegetation and homeowner mismanagement of native trees has caused the majority of erosion. Furthermore, natural occurrences such as last winter's storm have a greater impact on river health than boating.

There is no empirical evidence or peer-reviewed study that links the proposed restrictions to having any positive effect on fish populations. Wake sports largely take place in the summer, outside of key migratory or spawning months. Studies show that wake boats waves, when operated at least 200 feet from shore, do not carry enough energy to have a significant impact on most shorelines.

The Newberg Pool is already one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon. Wake surfers are subject to a weight limit, required to obtain a special safety certification and only allowed in two small zones with no adjacent homes or docks.

This bill not only exacerbates safety issues, but it also fails to solve a primary issue – enforcement. The state has already struggled to enforce the extensive laws and rules we have, and the bill does not address how to deal with the worst offenders who make the river dangerous for everybody.

Subjecting only towed water sports enthusiasts to a weight limit is overtly biased. A

5,000-pound fishing boat can produce a similar wake to the same size tow boat.
Furthermore a 15,000 cabin cruiser that produces a wake far greater than any wake
surfing boat can still operate freely under this legislation.