

Submitter: Chris Mitchell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB1589

February 9, 2022

SB 1589

Hello, My name is Chris Mitchell

Esteemed Senators,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I am a boater, paddleboarder, & Willamette Riverfront Property Homeowner

I am also the chair of the West Linn Riverfront Association an organization representing some 450 plus Willamette Riverfront Homeowners.

I am respectfully firmly opposed to SB 1589.

This is a concerted effort by the special interest groups, the Willamette Riverkeeper and the Calm Water coalition pushing for the complete ban of surf boats - under the guise of unproven erosion claims and fish safety – it appears they will use any and all reasons to ban a sport they do not like – very reminiscent of the groups who opposed snowboarding, and skateboarding in there early days.

5000lbs is absolutely arbitrary, after all the talk of waterskiing wakes being ok - My tournament-rated waterski boat will not be allowed on the river if you pass this ruling.

Most of the people opposing this bill are either of an age group where they have finished with their own towed watersports adventures or have chosen a different path to enjoy our waterways so have no interest in sharing the waterway with a group who they see as being detrimental to their enjoyment.

– Over the last 8 years I have experienced the erosion issue put forward as a reason to limit boat weights in front of my home for years.

But unlike other locations used as evidence of said erosion, my house is positioned on the river behind an island where there are absolutely zero wake boat wakes or wakes of any sort, as wakes are not achievable in front of my house thus demonstrating that the erosion in question most probably is actually not caused by wake surfing boats at all.

There are multiple studies that show that it is homeowners' lack of stewardship of their foreshore, & the annual flooding that occurs which creates property line erosion rather than the boat wakes.

Respectfully, after sitting through the last Public hearing where another version of this bill, SB 857, was being pushed,

That cherry-picked presentation with its- re showcasing of material from the special interest groups (Willamette Riverkeeper, Calm Water coalition), information which is easily rebuked – was farcical in its bias.

The heavily touted letter from NOAA provided as evidence has not been authenticated was apparently solicited by the Riverkeeper from a junior employee at NOAA not the signer of the letter.

The Fisheries Presentation although excellent has no merit with regards to the weight limit on boats as there is no evidence that this law would directly help the Fish issue. And Oregon rivers have experienced huge growth in numbers in Salmon over the last 10 years, which coincides with the use of these boats in the area in question.

There is NO evidence that the boat class being affected by this ruling is an issue apart from the derisive views of those who just plain do not like them or the culture they associate with the users of said boats.

Actual real long-term studies should be conducted to determine if there is an issue that this bill would seek to address and then and only then, a plan to keep the river and its users, safe and healthy implemented. I find it concerning that the Newberg Pool is already one of the most regulated bodies of water in Oregon,

This bill will make our waterways less safe and negatively impact Oregon families and small businesses. Setting an arbitrary boat weight limit that affects two out of three boats on the upper being active is simply unjust.

. At the very least, bills should be grounded in solid research and favor the general public, not select waterfront homeowners and paddlers looking to eliminate motorized boating for their own personal gain.

Thank you for your consideration,
Chris Mitchell