

*Friends of*  
**Historic Butteville**  
AN OREGON NONPROFIT CORPORATION

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February 7, 2022

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

BY: BENJAMIN WILLIAMS, FRIENDS OF HISTORIC BUTTEVILLE

RE: SB1589 – PLEASE SUPPORT

Friends of Historic Butteville is an Oregon nonprofit focused on the history of Butteville, and in addition to operating the Historic Butteville Store under contract for Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, we are restoring the Historic Butteville Landing—a six year long project that will end with the placement of a small mixed-use dock primarily for paddle craft.

The length of this project has included significant learning about wake boarding and wake enhancing devices as used in the Newberg Pool. The size of wakes generated by these power boats has not only forced us to re-engineer the dock design because a low freeboard dock would be awash with wake waves, but it has made us uniquely aware of other impacts and behaviors.

Among the behaviors of many wake board owners with property on the Willamette River in the Newberg Pool that is a belief it is their right regardless of the consequences. This is up to and includes recent testimony submitted in opposition by Shay Putnam.

Besides the standard wake boat industry talking points, to make the statement that “scientific studies show that waves from wake boats, when operated at least 200 feet from shore, do not carry enough energy to have a significant impact on most shorelines” is ludicrous. In fact, the University of Tasmania published Wave Wake Study (HB4099 Motor Boat Working Group; August 28, 2018) clearly demonstrates that while the intensity of wake-generated waves decreases in height by 20%, and in wave energy by 44% at 200 feet. However, at 300 feet distance, waves still retain 50% of their height and 33% of their energy. Apart from being a misrepresentation of fact, testimony of this nature ignores another local reality: The banks of the Willamette River are comprised of sandy clay loam soils highly subject to erosion.

Additionally, to assert that “residential development, not summer boat wakes, is the primary human-caused source of erosion” is preposterous. The Willamette River is well known for its Greenway, and that is not limited to the Newberg Pool. Residences must be set back and can not be built in the Greenway, nor in the floodplain. To go on, as Shay Putnam did, and assert that it is the “lack of native vegetation and homeowner mismanagement that has caused the majority of the erosion,” is the height of hypocrisy.

Consider the two photos below of the Putnam property in Butteville, taken in 2020, showing the extent to which they denuded the Greenway on their property, removing virtually all native vegetation and native trees, to create a beach-like environment for themselves!

