

Submitter: Grant Traver

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

As a member of the recreational boating community, I am writing to ask you oppose Senate Bill 1589 this session and allow the Newberg Pool to be safely shared. I have been part of the boating community here in the greater Portland area using both the Upper and Lower Willamette River multiple days a week during the boating season. As wakesurfing has evolved as a primary activity families are getting out on the water to do, they have been unfairly targeted simply because there are some people don't like wakes on the water. Wake sport tow boats are not the only boats on the water creating these wakes but are the only ones being blamed and unfairly targeted for the lack of enforcement on the water and the bad boating etiquette of a few. I encourage you to do more research before making such a serious decision that will affect so many families and local small businesses if this bill is pushed through. I know myself and many others in the boating community would love for all water enthusiasts to come together to create a safer Willamette river for all. I have added some points below on why I oppose Senate Bill 1589 and hope that you will too!

Hundreds of local families safely enjoy tubing, wakesurfing, wakeboarding and waterskiing in the Newberg Pool. These cherished pastimes support \$1.6 billion in economic impact, nearly 6,000 jobs and more than 400 local businesses. Unsubstantiated weight limits proposed in SB 1589 will force the majority of these families off the river, negatively impacting our community.

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.

Residential development, not summer 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 the erosion. Furthermore, natural occurrences such as last winter's storm have a much greater impact on river health than boating.

There is no empirical evidence or peer-reviewed study that links lowering the current boat weight limit or banning wake surfing to having any positive effect on fish populations in the Newberg Pool. Wake sports largely take place in the summer, outside of key migratory or spawning months. 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.

This bill exacerbates safety issues, and fails to solve a primary issue – enforcement. The state already struggles to enforce the laws and rules we have, and the bills do not address how to deal with the worst offenders who make the river dangerous for everybody.

I encourage you to oppose SB 1589 and instead support increased education and enforcement of existing boating regulations, combined with investments in site-specific research and bank management.

Please support Oregon families and small businesses by opposing SB 1589.

Thank you,
Grant Traver