

# Testimony on Senate Bill 1589

Dear Senators and Congressmen,

There is one very consistent theme in the last few years that has been incredibly disturbing and frustrating to me as a lifelong Oregonian. SB 1589 is a perfect example of how out of touch Salem is with our state. Let me remind you all that your job in this government is to represent the people who live in the state. I have actually found the government has been doing a horrible job of this lately both on the local level and on the state level and so I have taken it upon myself to inquire of the people in the form of petitions to hear their voice and therefore represent them to you. In this process I have been quite baffled by the fact that never do I get surveys or questionnaires or petitions from my own representatives either at the state level or the senate level. If your job is in fact to represent me then why do I never hear from you that is my question?

Our school district did a brilliant thing in August and sent out a survey to all the families in our school district. They asked how many people would be comfortable going back without masks and 90% of the responses to that survey were comfortable going back without masks. But what did our government do? They forced the entire state to go back to school without masks regardless of studies proving them useless and they are detrimental to the health and safety of our children.

My point to you is you are not listening to the voice of the people in the state. It was not even a question in my mind that the majority of people in Oregon that love using the river would actually like to continue to use it. The tragedy of this bill is it is literally been continuously brought through by Senator Kennemer over the last decade, and I might add continually defeated, it is his personal vendetta. Obviously he is accompanied by others and special interest groups with a lot of money that have been paying for this legislation to continually be ramrodded through our state. Despite year after year defeats at the Marine Board, the local levels and now the state it has been defeated year after year, but yet again, here we find ourselves having to fight for the right to use a public waterway because a small number of homeowners are upset.

I work with high school kids, I live near the river, it is one of the few beautiful resources left. Oregonians of all ages love to play on this river and this legislation will literally take it from Oregon and give it to the special interest groups that have all this money that they keep pumping it into this legislation. Their voices are not more important than the rest of Oregon but you are not asking to hear from all of Oregon you are just continually hearing from these special interest groups because they continue to pay for this type of legislation led by Senator Kennemer. It was sickening for me to see the other signers on this SB 1589. None of them live anywhere near this river, it's obvious that Senator Kennemer has gotten them to sign onto this bill probably as they're from all over the state and wholly unconnected to this region. I am not a politician but it disgusts me that all these people that live nowhere near this river are taking part in destroying it's use for those who do live here.

My question for you is have you done a survey? Have you asked the people who have bought homes on the river mostly to use it how they feel about this type of legislation because if your job is to represent us you should be asking those questions not us. Have you asked the people who live in Oregon how they would like this river to be used? Because those questions weren't being asked and because I had highschoolers devastated by the news at the river would be taken from them for all their activities I decided to create a petition. Within a few weeks we had almost 5000 signatures! And this was for this last time this came up in the legislature. Please read the attached petition, the comments attached and the names of the almost 5000 people attached who live in the state and do not want this legislation passed. We are the people that use this river that live in the state and you are the ones that we are asking to represent our voices in these decisions and vote NO on SB1589. This was created for the last time this was in the legislature, and yet the following year here we are again fighting the same battle that we just won. Oregonians are tired of this continual battle, it's exhausting to continue to defend our freedoms & rights to use the beautiful resources in our communities safely & freely. It's your job to preserve our freedoms not take them away!

The river is already insanely regulated. There are only two zones that you can even surf in and those zones are relatively uninhabited. Nine months out of the year there is almost no boat traffic on the river and those are the nine months when the river is the darkest & muddiest and clearly that is when the most riverbank erosion happens. Because of the weather in Oregon there are only a few months a year we can even use this beautiful treasure. This legislation would pretty much take this river away from most of Oregonians and give it to the elite rich people who have funded these political battles.

If you haven't been out of the state for a while you should go, we are the laughingstock of the nation. The government in Oregon has absolutely failed the people. You have used your power to serve your own interests and not represent the people of the state and a super majority has not taken into account their role as representatives regardless of their political party. The disaster that is Portland, and the absolute despicable treatment of our law enforcement, the skyrocketing crime, the promotion of Antifa & other terrorist groups and the catastrophic situation in Oregon schools is clearly where this government needs to be focused & instead we squabbling about law abiding Oregonians use of our river. Each of you should seriously think about why you even took this office and consider sending out surveys to your own constituents to find out what they actually want so that you can do the job of representing them. Oregon's government is out of touch with the people and we can change that but it starts with you.

I want to remind you there are many bodies of water in this state that do not allow any boats at all! For those people who are frustrated with the boats on the river, there are other places to live. There are very few waterways in Oregon that even allow boating. This is one of the very few and one of the treasures of Oregon. If you haven't already noticed there has been a mass exodus from the state almost solely due to the political decimation of cities and communities due to your policies that upset and anger your constituents. These are our families, our friends, the people who love Oregon & have been boating on the Willamette

all their lives. It is heartbreaking what this will do to our already downtrodden state. We are done with the partisan politics and the lack of representation of all of us in the government and we need you to hear our voices.

Around the country rivers and waterways are places of gathering communities, they are often developed with parks, restaurants, cafe lights & river walks. They are a blessing & gathering place for communities to be shared by the local cities and this concept of sharing the Willamette river with all of Oregon is what we are promoting by encouraging the continued use of it! We could also consider creating beautiful community areas where the river could be shared with even more people, parks with grassy areas like we have in downtown Portland, restaurants and shops and lights. We could do so much more to share this beautiful resource with all of our communities instead of taking it from them giving it to the wealthy special interest groups and small minority of home owners.

Think about who you represent. Think about ALL of your constituents & think about this Willamette river and what a great resource it is for all of Oregon and our future and please vote no on senate Bill 1589.

Sincerely,

Jenny Wiepert

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