

Submitter: Craig Richards

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

I am an avid fisherman, dragon boat tiller, and enjoy towed-sports.

As a fisherman I am not interrupted or bothered by towed sports as the river is there for everyone to share.

As a dragon boat tiller I understand how to navigate and keep my 20 paddlers safe. I have navigated plenty of large wakes from towed sports, commercial traffic, and tubers without any issue. It is usually other rowers or more frequently the coaches in motor boats for rowing teams that have caused me the most safety issues. The coaches are usually paying more attention to coaching than driving the boat. This one is what you need to get fixed!

As a towed-sports user of the river we are cautious around other boats, respect others on the water, and help when anyone needs help. We will stop if our activity will cause immediate danger to others on the water and ensure after passing smaller craft that our wake did not cause them issues. Which it never has.

The biggest problem is you do not need a boater education card or endorsement to paddle and it is usually the paddler that puts themselves in the dangerous situation. So instead of making more rules for power boat users please require education and licensing for paddlers.

The rules proposed are very one sided and seem to be that of a small group of people who do not like the number of boats on the river regardless of the activity they are doing. I encourage you to look at the facts and not the hearsay of a small group of people. If the boats you are proposing to ban cause so much damage and erosion why has no other government agency tried to impose the rules you are asking for? DEQ, Army Corps of Engineers, OSMB, Coast Guard.....

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I am monitoring the decisions closely.