

Submitter: Bryan McLean

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Measure: SB1589

Chair Marsh, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to oppose SB 1589.

My name is Bryan McLean. My business partner Pat McDonald and I own Northwest Boat Sports, a local small business that employs 16 people. We provide livable wages with medical, dental and retirement benefits. We pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes every year and we have proudly served the Willamette boating community for more than a decade. Our headquarters is strategically located on the Upper Willamette River to have close access to water test service boats and demo recreational boats.

I strongly oppose this bill because of the significant impact it will have on our ability to provide quality family-wage jobs and negative effect it will have on the broader boating community. Hundreds of local families, many of whom are my customers, safely enjoy tubing, wake surfing, 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 like mine. 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. Countless regulations have already been put in place to keep the section of the river safe and healthy. 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. The two small zones only total 3 miles of the total 20 mile Newberg Pool.

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 this winter's storms 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 salmon migratory or spawning months.

This bill fails to address the primary causes of declines in salmon and steelhead abundance in the Willamette Basin. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service latest report degraded habitat conditions due to land use and development activities, predation, hatchery practices, and dam passage - not boat wakes - are the primary concerns.

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. If this bill passes we would not be able to water test the majority of the boats we sell and service.

I encourage you to oppose SB 1589 and instead support increased education and enforcement of existing boating regulations, combined with investments in site-specific fisheries research and bank management. Please support Oregon families and small businesses by opposing SB 1589.

Thank you,

Bryan McLean
Owner/President
Northwest Boat Sports