

February 23, 2022

Honorable elected legislators of the State of Oregon

In response to Senate Bill 1589

I am writing today in opposition to Senate Bill 1589. I am deeply concerned with the legislative ability to restrict the use of a public waterway, under the guise of damage to homeowner's property and the erosion of the Willamette River bank. To my knowledge, there has not been substantiated proof that boats during the summer months are the cause of such damage. To restrict the rights of Oregonians to access public waterways for recreation and other activities, without due cause or substantiated proof would be a travesty of justice and overreach of legislative powers.

The Newberg Pool, a portion of the Willamette River, is and has been an area in which families come together for recreation and enjoyment of our beautiful state. This stretch of river, which is already highly regulated, would limit our ability to enjoy time together in activities that bring us together and create lasting memories in a safe environment.

The financial effect of such restrictions will be felt in many ways. From marinas that will be left empty to boat dealerships that will not be able to sell boats, this bill will place many industries at risk. It will also further disenfranchise Oregonians with their State. We live here for many reasons, and for many of us it is the ability to enjoy the great outdoors. If we limit activities such as this, and allow special interests to take control of everything they might be against, what is next? Will there be limitations or bans on those accessing ski areas in the winter because a small group believes they are damaging the environment? Will those who hunt, be told they are no longer able to engage in an activity they have done for a lifetime because a group is against harvesting game?

When will this end? There are many alternatives for those who wish to canoe or paddleboard or engage in other activities on the river. And, they can still safely engage in these activities with boats on this stretch of river. When will actual evidence be provided to show boats are the cause of any damage on the river? The Willamette River is a living thing. The greater cause of damage and erosion could and more likely is caused by the seasons and the rainfall that fills our rivers and reservoirs and keeps our beautiful.

I strongly hope it is the decision of the legislature to review the facts. Create equitable solutions rather than close a public waterway to recreation, and evaluate the real issues here before you, which is a small minority wishing to control public lands in this State.

Respectfully,

Greg Springer  
Tualatin Oregon