

Submitter: Paul Radke  
On Behalf Of: Myself  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: HB3006

Paul Radke  
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Tangent OR

I Canoe on moving water in Western Oregon, typically leading 30-50 WKCC paddle trips per year. I paddle a range of Class 1 through Class 3 tending to step up the splashy in warmer weather. On these paddles I pick up trash, usually beverage, food, clothes or homeless materials. I probably find some type of crumpled toy floaty wrapped on a log about every other trip, even in upper parts of creeks where one would not expect to find these items. I have found PFD's and several paddles for my collection over the years. When collecting this debris my thoughts are – someone had a bad day, and I reflect on the upstream river hazards we have seen. Sometimes when the items look fresh, we scan the river watching for the owner. (as in a victim) We see first hand the exposure to risk on the water by these cheap items and methods of others, especially the floaters, wishing something could be done towards this. We see a scant few in PFD's and are amazed how lucky, blessed or graced people are in surviving against forces of Nature.

We read in the news annually of people drowning while floating and padding, and the common thing that stands out about these fatalities is “was not wearing a life jacket”

The WKCC does a great job of staying out of the news. With < 320 members our people paddle thousands of hours annually, every creek, stream and river in Oregon you can name, we paddle them. Without newsworthy incidents. A core reason for this is our culture of safety; we don PFD's always, at all times, on all classes of water. We talk though an action plan before each paddle, we never paddle alone, we teach and use river paddle signals, we paddle sans alcohol. I hear strong voices of support among club members for the need for the HB 3006 concept.

From the public in general I feel the conversation on this subject is politicized between debates of personal freedoms vs mandates. I consider myself to be Conservative, and am generally not supportive of big government and mandates. But on this issue of paddlers and floaters donning safety gear, especially for kids, I do support law or rule making which mandates the simple, safe, proven PFD. Taking no action, leaving the situation as status quo would also be politization. I will state that the wearing of a correctly fitted PFD does not diminish an individual's enjoyment of the paddle or river recreation experience.

Being a Volunteer Fireman EMT myself, it has not gone unnoticed that most every point of public river access has been adopted by its nearby Fire District which erects and maintains kiosks offering of free loaner PFD's with the goal of preventing drownings. The First Responder community in Oregon also sees firsthand the

senseless results of existing inadequate river safety. Help fix this.

Thank You,

Paul Radke, President, (WKCC) Willamette Kayak Canoe Club