



February 9, 2024

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfires

Chair Senator Jeff Golden

Vice-Chair Senator Fred Girod

Senator Floyd Prozanski

Senator David Brock Smith

Senator Kathleen Taylor

Re: Opposition to SB 1590

Dear Chair Golden and Committee Members,

The introduction of SB1590 for the 2024 Short Legislative Session is misguided, considering the far more critical decisions on homeless and housing, drugs, safe communities, and schools that must be made within the course of a few weeks.

The fact is, the proposed replacement of SB1589, with SB1590 is redundant. The work on SB1589 was one of the most carefully reviewed Upper River regulations ever implemented in my 18 years on the river. To repeal rules that were so carefully vetted by river use studies, public input and testimony, and hydrological and environmental research makes another bill now redundant. The implementation of SB1589 and the Towed Watersports Program (HB2352), are very successful in the Upper Willamette.

There is no reason to change anything.

On the Portland Willamette, we have had similarly meticulous regulation processes to ensure safety and equitable opportunity for a widely diverse user community, on the most congested area of the river. Starting in June, 2019 and culminating in January 2021, public listening sessions, Stakeholder meetings, public comment, and testimony were taken. The resulting Pass-Through Zone in Portland and towed sport areas north and south of it are working. There has been a sharp increase in all forms of non-motorized users, fewer boater conflicts, wake damage and accidents. The bottom line is that the heavy lifting of introducing, vetting, collaborating and adopting regulations to best meet the needs of all Willamette River users is done.

There is no reason to change anything.

I hope that the Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee will consider the more than five years of work already done by the OSMB, legislators and the hundreds of citizens who worked on the Newberg Pool and Lower Willamette regulations, and recognizes the great success of their efforts.

Thank you,

Reneé Morgan

Coordinator, Calm Water Coalition

Chair, Portland Rowing Club