

Submitter: Ethan Jewett
On Behalf Of: 55th Cascadia Scout Troop
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure: SB1590

Dear Chair Golden and Committee Members,

I and the leaders of our Scout Troop strongly oppose SB 1590 and hope that you will as well. We believe the Willamette

River is a state treasure, and removing important protections is the opposite of what should be done with this signature Oregon waterway.

Our Scouts have for many years made day and multi-day canoe journeys on the Willamette; it has become a cornerstone of their spring, summer, and fall season. Before the current restrictions were introduced, we had learned to avoid those stretches of the river that were commonly used by heavy ballasted wake-generating boats, because at best it made for miserable paddling, but in some situations along the shoreline it was downright dangerous. With the current weight restrictions in place, paddle trips closer to Portland are safer and more attractive for us and many other river users.

Boats primarily designed to make enormous waves may be appropriate in large bodies of open water, like reservoirs, but they have no place on narrow waterways like the Willamette River. Beyond the hazard they all too often represent to other river users like our young Scouts, they create massive sediment disturbances in shallow waters, a brown smear of silt obvious to the naked eye when paddling along the shore. Adding a layer of silt atop the gravels and rocks that form important habitat and spawning areas would be a terrible backslide and quite frankly it would violate legal obligations to protect habitat.

The extremely small number of boats of this type in Oregon are extremely expensive to purchase and operate. Our public lands and waters are held in trust for all Oregonians, and it should not be the case that important safety, environmental, and property protections are thrown out for the simple enjoyment of a few well-heeled boat owners. This would be akin to allowing private helicopters use of our public parks; we would never do this, and for good reason. This issue is much the same, with the added cost of environmental harm and property damage.

Please do not allow SB 1590 to advance; we cannot move backwards on hard-won protections for the Willamette, especially not for the benefit of such a small number of people and a couple of boat dealers.

Ethan Jewett

Group Scoutmaster
55th Cascadia Scout Group