

Submitter: Stan Halle  
On Behalf Of: ORSPA and WGA  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire  
Measure: SB1590

TESTIMONY in Opposition to SB1590 by Stan Halle  
(2024-02-11v1)

I am a 23 year resident of Newberg Oregon, the last 11 years living on the Willamette River. As a active recreational boater, I've watched the years of misuse of the river by a small number wake-surfing boaters. They have no regard to the damage their activity causes to delicate shorelines, other boaters, swimmers, paddlers, etc. We've had to replace our entire dock due to severe wake damage.

As a founding member of the Oregon River Safety and Preservation Alliance (ORSPA) and the Willamette Greenway Alliance, we have worked hard to balance the needs of the many with the needs of the few. SB1590 would decimate the Towed Watersports Program that has done so much good to promote safe boating in the narrow, environmentally sensitive Newberg Pool.

- The Towed Sports Program was implemented in 2019 through the passage of HB2352 which created an improved education and certification program for wake sports in the Willamette River.
- SB1589 has significantly improved safety on the river — preventing serious injuries to boaters and other river users from dangerous and irresponsible behavior from massive wake boats.
- It has been tremendously successful in creating a safer and much enjoyable environment on the river — adding 100s more paddlers and boaters, (kayakers, kids, floaters, etc) who couldn't use the river safely prior to this legislation.
- We have also seen far less environmental damage to sensitive habitat and shoreline.
- The boating industry wants to go back to HB2352, which was implemented by the OSMB choosing 10,000 pounds and surf zones. This weight limit essentially did not stop any wake-surfing as the vast majority of these boats came under the 10,000 pound limit.
- OSMB also tried to implement zones in the Newberg Pool. Put simply, these zones did not work. There was virtually no enforcement fostering too many wake-surfing boaters to ignore the zones. These were damaging to sensitive habitat, other boaters and made the river less safe for smaller boats, water skiers, paddlers and others on the river.
- SB1589, however, did work. Why would you change something that worked and created a safer recreational experience for more people on the river while protecting sensitive environment habitat and endangered species in this narrow section of the Willamette?

Bottom Line: SB1590 is being promoted by the Towed Water Sports Industry. They have tried to 'buy' Committee members with political contributions and have distorted the issues for years. PLEASE VOTE NO ON SP1590.