

Testimony Against SB 301
Committee on Energy and Environment

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith and Members:

The subject of SB 301 is towed watersports in the Newberg Pool portion of the Willamette River. Our hazelnut farm borders the Willamette River in this section of the river. We have first hand knowledge of boating activities in the Newberg Pool, and in fact we have a dock and boat ourselves.

The goal of the recently “gut and stuffed” version of the bill now before your committee is to repeal SB 1589, which currently allows all towed watersports in the Newberg Pool with the exception of the most egregious large wake producers: wake surfing and towing by excessively heavy boats (over 5000 pounds). Everyone else gets to play on the river. The vast majority of recreational boats have a loading weight of 4000 pounds or less. SB 1589 also requires a short and simple common sense boater education course which helps boaters understand the impacts their boat wakes have on the environment and other river users.

SB 1589 has proven to be a successful compromise. The impact of the especially large wakes has been reduced. Erosion and river turbidity has gone down. We see less undercutting of our riverbank. We see more river users back on the water now- paddlers, fishers, kayakers, waterskiers and even wake boarders, many of which were unable to enjoy the river when super sized wakes were present. It is nearly impossible enjoy watersports or a day on the dock when you are struggling to keep a kayak upright, stay on a paddle board, not get thrown off your waterski or not fall off your chair on a dock. Please let's not go backwards on this.

SB 1589 was supported by extensive testimony from wave scientists, hydrologists, biologists, fishing groups, environmental groups, paddling organizations, river residents and many recreational boaters. Repealing this successful law which finally achieved a workable compromise for all river users would make no sense. Senator Meek and his gut and stuffed version of SB 301 represents the interests of national surf boat manufacturers and dealers as well as a few very outspoken wake surfers. They have the backing of these well funded national corporations who want to sell surf boats. Keeping SB 1589 in place allows maximum usage and protection of the river for Oregonians, not out of state boat manufacturers pushing sales of their \$200,000 boats. Oregon was one of the early states to deal with the issue. Other states are catching on to the problems of surfing wakes and will be looking to states like Oregon to model new boating rules.

I urge you to reject SB 301 and let SB 1589 stand.

Thank you, Maria Hall, Willamette Farms.