

Submitter: Nancy Anderson
On Behalf Of: Nancy Anderson
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

I oppose this bill due to the following concerns.

Public Safety: Since SB 1589 passed, the number of paddlers, swimmers, anglers, and small craft users at the Newberg Pool has increased significantly. These calm waters are a haven for low-impact recreation. Allowing 5,500+ pound wake boats—operating with undisclosed ballast weight—will bring back dangerous conditions that put families and all users at risk.

Environmental Harm: The Newberg Pool is critical habitat for federally protected Upper Willamette River Chinook salmon and steelhead. These species rely on this section of the river for migration and spawning. Large, artificial wakes from ballast-laden boats erode shorelines, damage riparian vegetation, and degrade fish habitat.

Enforcement Impossibility: Ballast weight was included in SB 1589 after a decade of failed enforcement on the old "no ballast" rule. We learned that without ballast weight considered, compliance collapses. Law enforcement and marine officials testified repeatedly that the existing ballast ban was ignored and unenforceable.

Corporate Profits Being Weighted More Heavily Than Users. Meek's proposal prioritizes the profits of out-of-state corporate boat manufacturers and a small minority of wake boat users over the thousands who rely on the Newberg Pool for safe, sustainable recreation.

Facts: (1) The average loading weight of most boats using this section is well under 4,000 lbs. (2) There are many other locations on the Willamette River where large wake-generating boats can safely operate. (3) Peer-reviewed studies—including the newly published work by Professor Macfarlane—recommend a minimum 500-foot buffer for wake boats to protect shorelines, which is way more than the Newberg Pool can provide. (4) Legislation already exists to adjust weight thresholds responsibly if needed.

What Senator Meek is apparently doing: counting on confusion or misunderstanding - the appearance that he's just "editing" regulations, when he's actually making it possible for larger wake boats to once again dominate the Newberg Pool, which would reverse seven years of progress.

Say no to this last-minute political power play.

