

Submitter: Jenny McCallum  
On Behalf Of: Jenny McCallum Wilsonville Oregon  
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Dear Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,  
My name is Jenny McCallum, and I have been a homeowner on the Willamette River for over 20 years. My family of five, along with our extended family, has cherished countless memories on the river, enjoying activities like wakeboarding, tubing, and water skiing. However, recent restrictions have made it impossible for us to continue these beloved water sports, which has been deeply disappointing for us and our community.

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 301, which seeks to remove ballast from the Newberg Pool boat weight limit and restore access to towed water sports for families like mine. The current regulations unfairly penalize recreational boat owners, excluding them from participating in safe and family-oriented activities that bring us closer to nature and to one another.

For example, the regulation counting unused ballast weight toward the overall weight limit disproportionately affects boaters with recreational boats, while fishing or pontoon boats with higher dry weights can still tow riders. This inconsistency not only limits fair access but has also had a negative impact on our local economy. Small businesses that rely on the recreational boating community—like marinas, surf shops, and local eateries—are being hurt, as families face reduced opportunities to engage in water sports.

This legislation provides a simple yet essential adjustment that benefits both families and regulators. By removing ballast from the weight calculation, the Oregon State Marine Board will have a clearer and more manageable system to oversee, while families will regain access to the river for safe and enjoyable water sports.

It is also worth noting that the Newberg Pool will remain one of the most highly regulated waterways in Oregon. Boaters must continue to meet rigorous safety requirements, complete an online education course, and pay additional fees. These safeguards ensure that the river remains protected, while creating fair opportunities for recreational users.

While Senate Bill 301 does not restore wake surfing zones, I see this as a positive and meaningful step toward restoring equitable access to our river. I am hopeful that continued discussions will address other exclusions, further enhancing the inclusivity and sustainability of the Willamette River for all users.

As someone who has seen firsthand the joy and community spirit that towed water sports bring to families and neighbors, I urge you to support this bill. Passing Senate Bill 301 will allow families like mine to once again enjoy the river while supporting the small businesses that rely on recreational boating for their livelihoods.

Thank you to Senator Meek for his leadership in championing this cause, and thank you to the Committee for considering this critical issue.

Respectfully,  
Jenny McCallum