

Submitter: Jorge Reyes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 301 due to concerns regarding personal safety and environmental impact.

As an avid kayaker and paddleboarder, I have firsthand experience navigating our waterways alongside wake-producing boats. Currently, the existing wake size serves as a reasonable upper limit. When speedboats or other large wake-producing vessels are present, I must stop paddling, reorient myself for stability, and brace for the incoming waves. While I do not take issue with the presence of these boats, I worry that increasing wake sizes would make kayaking and paddleboarding unsafe, ultimately discouraging participation in these activities. Public waterways should be accessible and enjoyable for all users, not just those operating larger boats.

To illustrate this point, I compare it to my experience as a dirt biker. There are countless natural areas where riding would be exhilarating, yet restrictions exist to ensure that hikers, birdwatchers, and dog walkers can also enjoy these spaces. While I may have to compromise my own interests slightly, these rules allow for equitable use of shared land. Similarly, wake size limitations are necessary to ensure that everyone—whether they prefer motorized boating, paddling, or fishing—can continue to enjoy our waterways safely.

Beyond safety concerns, the environmental impact of increased wake sizes cannot be ignored. As someone who has recently taken up fishing, I have witnessed how wakes disturb shorelines, erode fish habitats, and disrupt the tranquility of the water. Larger wakes would accelerate shoreline erosion, damaging fragile riparian ecosystems and leading to costly repairs. Given ongoing budget cuts to environmental protections, it is unrealistic to expect that these damages will be properly mitigated. Moreover, it is unfair to impose the burden of repairing such damage on individuals who do not contribute to it.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose SB 301. Preserving the accessibility, safety, and ecological health of our waterways benefits all users and ensures that these spaces remain enjoyable for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust you to act in the best interests of all you represent.

Sincerely,
Jorge Reyes