

Submitter: Derek Bliss

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Dear Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

My name is Derek Bliss and I'm an active user of the Willamette River. and reside in a neighborhood of 155 homes which share similar beliefs of fair access to the river for safe water activities. I am writing you to express my strong support for Senate Bill 301. The towed water sports community has a very simple and reasonable request with this legislation to be treated equally to all other boat users in the deep waters of the Newberg Pool.

As a boat owner, I am unfairly treated and excluded from using my boat for safe water activities because it has the capability to have additional weight. As it is, the boat is well within the limit for towed water activity, but because the capability is there, we are excluded even though it may not contain the ballast for additional weight.

I am a strong believer in equity and not being penalized for what isn't being done or the possibility of what could happen.

This small adjustment makes it easier for the Oregon State Marine Board to manage the towed water sports program and for customers to understand which boats qualify. There is no national standard for registering ballast capacity, making compliance a moving target. The legislation's "maximum ballast capacity" is also overtly punitive. Our family made a conscious decision to purchased a boat with smaller ballast capacity to ensure we are under the 5,500 combined weight limit, only to be denied a permit because their boat line has a model with a larger ballast, which we did not purchase.

I do not believe legislators intended to exclude more than 90% of new recreational boat models from the river, crushing local small businesses and making it almost impossible for everyday people to buy qualifying boats. We want to have the opportunity to share the river, have fun with our families and safely enjoy the sports we love for a few months out of the year.

With this legislation, the Newberg Pool will remain one of Oregon's most highly regulated water bodies. To tow riders in this river stretch, boaters must meet the weight requirement, complete an online safety education course, apply for a towed watersports decal and pay additional fees.

Please support local small businesses and families like mine by passing this small

yet meaningful ask. I welcome a honest conversation and any questions you may have to begin a meaningful dialogue.

Respectfully,
Derek Bliss