

Submitter: Greg Block
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301
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We have great news – our mission to increase public access to towed water sports in the Newberg Pool is one step closer to reality. The Oregon Legislature is now accepting public comment on Senate Bill 301, our new bill to remove ballast from the Newberg Pool boat weight limit and increase the opportunity for wakeboarding, waterskiing and tubing. The opposition is already weighing in, and we need EVERY boater in Oregon to take two minutes TODAY to show legislators that the majority of the community supports reform. Please submit your written comments here by Wednesday, March 26 at 3pm.

By adding your voice to this cause, elected officials can hear from real people in their communities on the issues that matter to them. We know the boating community is exhausted from advocating for this issue, but this has real momentum, and we need your support to get it to the finish line. Below are some talking points and instructions to assist you with the simple process that only takes two minutes.

How to Submit Testimony:

- Visit the Testimony Submission form for Senate Bill 301 at:
<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Testimony/SEE/SB/301/2025-03-26-15-00?area=Measures>
- Fill in the name, residence and email address fields
- Choose “support” for your position on this bill
- Select “text testimony”
- Write in your text testimony
- Respectfully tell the Oregon Legislature why you support this bill. Even just a couple of sentences saying you support the bill works.

Below is a sample letter that you are encouraged to customize to describe how this issue has impacted your family.

Dear Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

My name is Greg Block and I’m an active user of the Willamette River. 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.

Many boaters with ballast capability are unfairly excluded from participating in their favorite activities, such as tubing, water skiing and wakeboarding in the Newberg Pool, because their unused ballast weight is counted toward the overall weight limit. Today, a fishing or pontoon boat with a dry weight of 5,500 pounds is eligible to tow a tuber in the Newberg Pool, but an everyday recreational boat with a much lower dry weight cannot because it has ballast capability, which is prohibited.

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. Families have purchased boats with smaller ballast capacity to ensure they 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 they 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.

Respectfully,

Greg Block