

Submitter: Travis Williams
On Behalf Of: Those who like healthy and safe rivers.
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301
Oregon Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith and Committee Members:

I write in opposition to SB 301. This issue in the Oregon Legislature seems like the movie Groundhog Day with Bill Murray. Each session the Wake Boat industry comes back to the Oregon Legislature with creative (and misleading) ideas about how to convince you all and the general public that wake boats are somehow like all other boats. The only problem is that their arguments are false. Instead of accepting the truth that their craft literally weigh thousands of pounds more than the average recreational power boat, and that they are designed to produce artificial waves upon which to "surf," on inland waters such as the Willamette River, they seek to have us believe that they have somehow been wronged.

Oregon took a stand in regard to these craft, and that should remain. It is not a surprise that many states are implementing strategies to deal with this small subset of craft, that at the same time have a very oversized and tangible impact on river health and other waterway users. Further, this small subset of the power boat industry seems to think of itself as somehow aggrieved, and they pout about how their highly engineered craft, that generally start with a price of over \$100k, are unfairly attacked. Sorry, but that general argument and sentiment does not pan out in reality.

There is a very clear reason that this issue is before you today - Wake Boats have an outsized impact on the health of the Willamette River, and present very clear issues in regard to safety for other river users. I've had to cross their wakes in a power boat multiple times, and it is something that must be done carefully. The stakes are even higher for canoes, kayaks, paddle boards and other human powered craft. In a time when the State of Oregon continues to work to promote our waterways as an attraction for tourism, the presence of wake boats works against that opportunity with the danger their artificial waves present.

Just look at the websites of the wake boat manufacturers. They routinely present

what these craft can do, with specificity. It is obvious they are not like other power boats. They are designed to produce 4ft waves that on a relatively narrow waterway like the Willamette River, slam into the shoreline, stir up sediment during times of low water levels, and generally wreck not only riverine habitat, but any semblance of what should be expected as normal on a river like the Willamette. They can make sense on much larger and deeper water bodies, but not on the vast majority of the Willamette.

I served as Riverkeeper and Executive Director of Willamette Riverkeeper for 24 years until last June, and have seen this issue over and over. I've authored multiple books and guides to paddling and camping along the river, and I also own a power boat - resulting in being in close touch with this issue for a long time. At the end of the day Oregon took solid action to regulate these craft. Senator Meek has arrived, yet again, with another bill to alter what the State of Oregon has already done at the behest of wake boat companies in his district, but that does not require this Committee to take any action whatsoever.

I appreciate your consideration.

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