

Submitter: Nicolas Gold

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Strong Opposition to SB 301 and the -1 Amendment – Protect Public Safety and Habitat in the Newberg Pool

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicolas Gold, and I am a resident of Eugene and a frequent user of the Willamette River. I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 301 and its -1 Amendment.

This bill directly threatens public safety, clean water, and fragile fish and wildlife habitat in the Newberg Pool stretch of the Willamette River. By removing ballast weight from vessel compliance calculations—established under SB 1589 in 2022—SB 301 would dismantle carefully crafted protections for one of Oregon’s most sensitive river corridors.

Since SB 1589’s passage, the Newberg Pool has become measurably safer and more accessible for paddlers, anglers, families, and other small craft users. Reducing the impact of large, ballasted wakes has curbed erosion, protected threatened fish species, and made the river more welcoming to all Oregonians—not just those with large motorized wake boats.

SB 301 is not a technical tweak—it is a dangerous step backward. The bill opens the door for oversized wake boats to return to the Newberg Pool under a false pretense of compliance. It disregards the science, enforcement realities, and the voices of thousands of river users who supported SB 1589.

If enacted, SB 301 would:

?? Compromise Public Safety – Reintroduce large, hazardous wakes into a narrow, multi-use stretch of river.

?? Damage Habitat – Threaten ESA-listed Chinook salmon and steelhead during key life stages.

?? Accelerate Erosion – Undo progress in stabilizing riverbanks and preserving riparian ecosystems.

?? Hamstring Enforcement – Return us to an unworkable ballast-only ban that the Oregon State Marine Board has deemed unenforceable.

I urge the Committee to reject SB 301 and the -1 Amendment. These changes benefit a narrow industry interest at the expense of community safety, ecological integrity, and long-standing public use of the river.

Please protect the Newberg Pool—for wildlife, for public safety, and for future generations of Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nicolas Gold
Eugene, OR