

Submitter: Elizabeth McCord

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Dear Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

I am writing you to express my strong support for Senate Bill 301 - which would allow all boaters on the Willamette River to be treated equally 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. The unused ballast weight of certain recreational boats is counted toward the overall weight limit; however, a fishing or pontoon boat with a dry weight of 5,500 pounds is eligible to tow a tuber in the Newberg Pool. An Oregon family who owns a recreational boat with a much lower dry weight is not allowed the same participation in family boating activities because their recreational boat has ballast capability, which given the current rules is prohibited.

This small adjustment made with Senate Bill 301 allows the Oregon State Marine Board to manage the towed water sports program more easily and for customers, families, and boating enthusiasts to understand where/when their recreational boat allows for family recreational activities such as tubing, water skiing and wakeboarding. 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.

Having been a boater who has participated conversations with many legislators, I do not believe legislators intended to exclude more than 90% of new recreational boat models from the river. The rules in place has had an impact not only on Oregon families but also on local businesses. We have always strived to find compromise and have the opportunity to share the river with all river users; so we all can enjoy the public waterway as we have fun with our families and safely enjoy the sports we love for a limited few months out of the year.

With this legislation, the Newberg Pool will continue to 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. This Senate Bill allows for all

recreational boaters to enjoy the same water sports as other boats with a dry weight of 5,500 pounds.

Please support this legislation and help all Oregon families enjoy the beautiful Willamette River.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth McCord

Wilsonville river homeowner, who enjoys boating, stand up paddleboarding, and spending time on the river with family & friends