

Submitter: Joe Moore
On Behalf Of: the river
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Chair Sollman and other members of the Senate Committee On Energy and Environment.

I'm a registered voter in Washington County, Oregon. I'm also a canoe paddler and kayaker. I've spent time paddling on the Willamette River, and I'm hoping to do more. And I'm hoping to do so safely.

I am writing to express my extreme opposition to SB301, and especially the Amendment -1.

If I am reading the bill and the amendment correctly, this is what pundits used to call a "gut and stuff," where a legislator proposes a bill that sounds good on it's face, then an amendment gets stuck in that removes everything in the original bill and stuffs in something else, usually something that the legislator wants to keep on the down low.

To wit: SB301 appears to direct the Marine Board to study boat safety. (I would hope they're already doing this.) Lines 1 and 2 of amendment -1, rather than "studying" something, would actually change the existing law ORS830.640 and 830.643. Line 3 of the amendment say "delete lines 4 through 8..." referring to the original bill, SB301. Lines 4 through 8 of the original bill is...the entire original bill. Hmmm.

The pertinent parts of the rest of amendment -1 remove consideration of the factory-specified ballast capacity in these boats, in order to get the official tag. In other words, once these boats get on the river, they can fill up these ballast tanks and make these boats heavy enough to..... I'll leave out the colorful language.

This is the sort of legislative shenanigans that give legislators a bad name.

If the folks who own these boats, sell these boats, and support this activity want to promote it, then they should put forward a bill that is up front about what is being promoted, and not hidden behind a 'boating safety study' proposal.

Other comments, I'm sure, will speak to the damage and injury these wake board boats do to water quality, to the animals and plants that live along the river, to infrastructure along the river, and to other people on the river. I echo those concerns. Those are all legitimate concerns, and apparently the law as it exists is addressing those concerns.

I believe it was last summer there were a couple of incidents on the Willamette in Portland, in which power boat users kicked up waves so big that some dragon boats were swamped, endangering multiple paddlers.

Is this the sort of thing we want legalized?

I learned to water ski in the late 1970s, on Lake Norfolk in Arkansas. No one had boats like these, and everyone had a great time. The Willamette River is tiny compared to Lake Norfolk. It amazes me to see people skiing there. Boats that can kick up ocean sized waves? The Newberg Pool of the Willamette River is not the place for them.

Senator Sollman, you knocked on my front door and asked for my vote. We had a good conversation that day, and I have in fact voted for you since. I'm asking you and your committee to stop this bill and this amendment from moving forward.

Thank you.