

Submitter: Grady Nelson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Dear Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

My name is Grady Nelson and I was a very active daily user of the Willamette River. I am writing you to express my extremely strong support for Senate Bill 301. Being a member of the towed water sports family and community I have continued to advocate for 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.

Being a former owner of a boat and having to sell it during my sons last few years in high school, spending time on the river with he and all his friends were abruptly stopped, shattering the connections we had with a majority of his friends. We would enjoy the ebb wings and weekends, have kids on the boat and enjoy the environment. By boat had ballast capability and we were unfairly excluded from participating in their favorite activities, such as tubing, water skiing and wakeboarding in the Newberg Pool, because my unused ballast weight was counted toward the overall weight limit.

Yet, currently, 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 of its ballast capability, which is prohibited.

By approving this small adjustment, makes it easier for the Oregon State Marine Board to manage the towed water sports program and for people like me 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.

Sincerely,
Grady Nelson