

Submitter: Greg Waters

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 Greg Waters and I'm an active user of the Willamette River, I live within a mile of Boonesferry Marina. I bought my property there to be close to the river for my families recreation and boat sales is my livelihood and how I provide for my family. This directly impacts us, recently I had a boat sold to one of my neighbors that lives on the river. It was a 2016 Tige R21 that has a brochure weight of 4200 lbs. because it has an "optional" ballast weight of 2400 lbs he was told from OSMB that he would not be able to get the sticker for that boat. He pulled his deposit on that boat and we still haven't found a boat that he likes that will get the towed water sports sticker.

I also would like to ask all the decision makers on this Bill to go to Boonesferry Marinas live you tube on their website and look at the live stream today March 26, 2025. Here is the link

<https://www.youtube.com/live/Y3cM4bK01JE?si=yjHAj1ch0VEHmFqy>

In this live stream you will see the river all the way up over the roadway we use to launch boats. The river is flowing so fast 24/7 right now and will be for days till it goes back down. When it goes back down you will see inches of mud covering the whole boat launch.

The river never looks like this on the busiest 100 degree boating day in the middle of summer.

I am writing you to express my strong support for Senate Bill 301. The towed water sports community has 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.

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, because their unused ballast weight is counted toward the overall weight limit. Today, 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 it has ballast capability, which is prohibited.

This small adjustment makes it easier for the Oregon State Marine Board to manage the towed water sports program and for customers 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.

Respectfully,

Greg Waters