

To Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Smith, and the Committee on Energy and Environment:

I am writing to urge the committee to **OPPOSE** SB 301. I believe this bill is a waste of legislator resources, as it merely tries to find ways to roll back a bill introduced just 3 sessions ago, SB 1589.

As I'm sure you are well aware, there is plenty of testimony both in support of and in opposition to this bill. It's clear that many Oregon residents have strong opinions about this bill! Both sides have studies to cite, personal stories, and in their eyes, a compelling argument for why they are right.

I am sympathetic to both sides in this. However, it seems to me that on every talking point, the argument to keep the existing restriction in place would be the correct thing to do.

The support side has reasoning about why ecological impacts would be minimal, but it's unquestionable that the larger the wake, the more it can impede other users of the river. A boat is a significant capital investment, whereas a kayak, tube, or swimsuit are much more accessible. If the restrictions were to be relaxed to allow larger boats back onto the river, it would be granting access to one particular use with significant barriers to entry (money), at the expense of a larger base of potential river users. Therefore, if we want to provide river access to the widest base of people, minimizing wakes is the path forward.

Those that support this bill and want to allow larger boats back onto the Willamette can cry foul and claim they are being restricted. That may be true. But it's part of living in a society and a planet where we share natural resources. By maintaining as much public access to the river as possible (thru minimizing wakes), we get to preserve the river's *natural* resources as well. Why should the legislature waste its time with this bill? The current system is working.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to **OPPOSE** SB 301.