

Submitter: Chantel Herbert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

Below is a copy of the verbal testimony I gave yesterday, but I wanted to add some additional information based on the opposition testimony. The argument that ballast use would be hard to enforce is inaccurate. When a boat has ballast in it, it sits lower in the water and the swim platform is submerged, which is easy to see. It was also said that the ballast drains quickly, not the case. It can take up to 8 minutes to fully drain some ballast systems and there isn't a sneaky way to do it, it'd be very obvious. Additionally, the reason to use ballast is for wakesurfing, and it is VERY obvious when someone is wakesurfing.

It's also insulting that the opposition believes that we would use ballast even when illegal. We WANT to follow the rules. We WANT to comply. The way the current law is written, it is assuming that we are going to use it. Untrue

Chair Sollman and Members of the Committee, my name is Chantel Herbert, and I'm the Sales Manager at Active Water Sports, a family-owned business headquartered in the Newberg Pool. Today I want to share my strong support for SB 301.

I'm here on behalf of not only my 30 colleagues who rely on public access to recreational boating for their livelihoods, but the 400 businesses and 8,000 jobs across Oregon that are supported by the recreational boating industry.

The challenges created by the restrictions for our local small business, and our employees, have been enormous. The legislation kicked hundreds of registered and licensed families off the river and local small businesses, like ours, suffered sales losses in the millions due to the decline in recreation in the Newberg Pool. Many businesses like Active Water Sports rely on reasonable public access to Oregon's waterways to keep our doors open.

The laws have directly led to reduced hours, loss of employees, and financial strain for our employees and their families. Nationally, boat sales have dropped an average of 15% within the last year. For us, with less boaters able to utilize our products in the Newberg Pool, boat sales have dropped by roughly 40%.

Under the current law, of the 76 tow boats available, only 4 meet the requirement. If Senate Bill 301 is passed, it would increase to half of the models. We are not trying to get the biggest, most massive boats out there, we are just trying to have the same access as other boats with the same weight.

I spend a LOT of time on the river, not just professionally, but personally as well. I am a waterskier and have a boat that weighs under 4,000lbs, well below the 5,500lb

weight limit. With the verbiage in the law, because my boat COULD have ballast, it does not qualify for the towed watersports endorsement, so I am unable to use it for skiing on the Upper Willamette. Not only would I not use ballast to ski, but it's not legal to use ballast there anyway. Ballast weight should not be included in the boat weight.

I have been an avid boater my entire life and love all of the beautiful waterways Oregon has to offer. Since the strong restrictions on the Upper Willamette, I have seen increased traffic on the lower Willamette, Billy Chinook, Hagg Lake, and more. Pushing recreational boaters into smaller areas not only makes it more dangerous for the boaters, but for everyone else utilizing the waterways as well. I am passionate about bringing new boaters into our community and giving them as much education and training as possible. Boating is something that should always been done safely, and I am confident that the passage of SB 301 will help make the waterways safer. Supporting SB 301 is crucial for businesses like ours, for our employees, and for the communities we serve. It's about more than just water sports; it's about preserving local jobs, families' livelihoods, and the vibrancy of where we live. I urge you to support SB 301 and consider the positive impacts it will have on our small businesses, local economy, and the well-being of our community. Thank you again for your time.