

Submitter: Jon Strand  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301  
In Opposition to SB301 - 1

I am a riverfront homeowner (since 2000) in the Newberg Pool section of the Willamette River and I strongly oppose SB301 with the -1 amendment. The -1 amendment seeks to remove the ballast weight from how the total wake boat weight compliance is measured, and effectively guts SB 1589's safety & ecological protections from wake damage, and gut all of SB 1589's enforceability of limiting Towed Water Sports based on boat weight. The vast majority of ski boats using the upper Willamette weigh <3,500 pounds and create small wakes that dissipate in 100-200 feet. The dry weight of 24ft wake surfing boats (the most popular length) can range from 5,000-6,200 pounds and can then add 200-600 gallons of water in their WED/ballast tanks (water weight: 8.345# per gallon; range 1,669#-5,007# water weight), to create extremely heavy boat weights of ~6,700-11,200 pounds (data reference: Supra boat website) that can cause 3-4 foot high, powerful water wakes to slam into swimmers & non-motorized watercraft, docks and shorelines.

Our family and neighbors have experienced significant & expensive structural dock damage (hoop shear, flotation dislodging, etc.) in prior years from large ballast boats that repeatedly broke the law on the use of wake enhancement device (WED) technology to create 3-foot+ high waves for wake surfing (and at times, for wake boarding as well) and boated closely to our dock. These very large ballast/WED wakes need 500 feet to dissipate\* without causing potential damage to dock infrastructure (shearing off hoops holding docks to pilings, dislodging flotation under docks, fracturing dock frame infrastructure, etc.), potential injury to persons swimming by a dock or standing on a dock that gets hit by a 3-4 foot boat wave (and >90% of these WED boats drive by within 100' of docks, another frequent violation that is nearly unenforceable unless a water sheriff is driving right by the dock), and damage to shoreline ecology.

The Newberg Pool river stretch varies from 330-660 feet in width, and given Professor Macfarlane's recent peer-reviewed report(\*) that shows larger wake-generating boats require buffer space from shorelines of 500 feet or more, these large ballast/WED boats (that can weigh 6,700-11,200 pounds if ballast tanks are filled/WED used) cannot reasonably even boat in the center of the Newberg Pool river stretch without sending destructively large waves onto docks and shorelines.

The Oregon State Marine Board testified that a ban on wake enhancing devices, also known as ballast, was "ineffective and unenforceable".

SB301, as amended -1, would permit these largest wake boats (>5,500 pounds total weight) to obtain a towed watersports decal, and their wakes will most likely have significant and negative consequences on the safety and quality of our waterways, and cause expensive dock damage to most riverfront homeowners.

SB301-1 would not only undo the positive progress in river safety that SB 1589 has made after careful consideration by law makers, but could also hinder progress in managing our waterways for a growing number of recreational users. There are other larger bodies of water in our region that could handle the massive wave forces that these large, ballasted/WED wake surfing boats create; the Newberg Pool cannot.

I urge lawmakers to consider the advancements we've made with current regulations and to reject SB301 as amended (-1), as it would take us backward in our efforts to create safer, more accessible waterways for all.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.