

Submitter: Don Fuchs

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB301

I am submitting this testimony to express my strong opposition to SB301 with the -1 amendment, which has been amended to simply reinstate the wake enhancement device (WED) ban originally implemented in 2009, a time when wake boats weighed around 3,500 pounds, ballast was commonly used, and boat design and technology was not focused on making large wakes but even those wakes from those smaller boats were damaging.

This bill offers no new research or data to support their claim that large wake boats engaging in towed water sports won't have an adverse impact. ALL previous research and data from our state and others clearly illustrates that large wake boats cause significant damage to shorelines that are less than 500 feet away (even without ballast they create large wakes and the new rule will permit them to use ballast). The Newberg Pool consists of primarily narrow stretches of river and soft sandy loam soil which is highly conducive to wave induced erosion. If we are going to consider changing the current legislation (which is working very well) it should be based on scientific data that supports any changes to the current rules. Supporters of this bill have not and will not be able to produce any research that will support the position that changing the existing rules will be beneficial. It is clearly evident by the data that these large boats simply should not engage in towed water sports in the upper Willamette River.

SB301, as amended, would permit the largest wake boats to obtain a towed watersports decal, which will create safety issues, significant property damage, environmental harm, and will take us back to those days in which there was significant conflict between the large boats and all other users of the river. The current legislation is working well and has made the rivers safer and has restored the balance that was needed amongst the various river constituents.

SB301 would not only undo these positive changes, made after careful consideration by law makers and a lot of scientific research by experts, and it will reintroduce the conflict between all of the users that we had during that time which was significant.

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