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Attn: Chair McKeown and Committee Members

r.e. HB 2320

My name is Sam Drevo and I am a small business owner in Oregon, operating an outfitter guide business (kayak school / raft company) for sixteen years in Oregon. I am a kayak instructor trainer for the American Canoe Association, a canoe & SUP instructor, an IRF raft guide trainer, a Rescue 3 swiftwater rescue instructor, and a Wilderness First Responder. I work closely with the American Medical Response river guide training program and have developed the Oregon Whitewater Association River Safety Training program. I am a Reed College professor of Outdoor Education, consult with many colleges and university outdoor programs throughout the state, and have been involved in the OSMB non-motorized boating advisory committee for the past four years. I have been closely monitoring and providing feedback through the development in this bill and while I fundamentally agree with creating a non motorized boating program like this within the state of Oregon, I have reservations about this bill in its current form.

My initial interest in getting involved with this OSMB non-motorized committee was a result of what I perceived as a massive gap in basic water safety awareness and “leave no trace” ethic within the “non-motorized craft” community in Oregon. For a state with more wild and scenic rivers than any other state in the country, many visitors and casual floaters are uneducated about our rivers and end up causing problems & doing damage to our precious resources. The “non-motorized craft” explosion has less to do with non-motorized “boats” in many areas and more to do with “non motorized craft” users inundating the rivers during peak times, and requiring additional marine law enforcement while lacking education resources. It is the “non motorized craft” user group that has the biggest negative impact and should be the largest contributor to this new program.

I support the aspects of this bill that require lifejackets for “non-motorized crafts”, “vessels” and “floaters” navigating any section of river outside a designated swimming area on inner tubes and other floating devices, and I do believe that these users (in these high use / explosive growth areas with often thousands of users on a given day) should pay for added enforcement and education. It is these users, along with recreational flat water non-motorized boaters in and around urban areas that put a significant burden on existing marine board facilities, marine enforcement, and have an increased need for safety education.

Life-long non-motorized boaters will be negatively impacted by this bill as it’s currently written while not necessarily receiving benefit. Many of these paddlers in the state (and organized clubs) have a much higher level of education and a lower need for support from the OSMB because they paddle in remote places and do not use marine board facilities. These very same people and clubs are the volunteer river stewards that make up the front lines for conservation, restoration, and education in Oregon. This group has a self-regulated system of instructor certification programs (is connected to higher education), and educate through an extensive network of clubs and national organizations (like American Canoe Association and American Whitewater). Such organizations are doing a good job of educating this user group and at a higher level than the OSMB will be able to provide and in fact is providing much of the education for the OSMB about the non-motorized boating community.

My real concern stems from the reality that a family of four would be forced to pay \$80/ annually to go for a canoe trip 3-4 times throughout the summer. The renewal fee should be lower than what an average first year boater would pay. Any lifetime paddler could end up paying close to \$1000 in permits in Oregon alone and many paddlers cross state lines, so that number could jump significantly if you add the four states we border, and if you are a family of four that number could become prohibitively expensive. I am a firm believer that the OSMB and the state should be advocating for people to learn to paddle and not charging minors for this program (technically paddling on a public waterway should be free). I think fourteen years of age to start charging fees is too young and the only justification I heard for this age is “This is the age when ODFW starts charging for fishing permits.” I believe non-motorized boating and fishing are very different activities, because the former is merely experiential, and the latter is extractive and consumptive.

The OSMB must continue to do outreach, build constituencies and learn what needs there are in the non-motorized boating community to develop this program. To this point there have been many instances when the OSMB is looked at as a purely regulatory agency that is trying to restrict access as opposed to supporting the work many organizations are doing to encourage use for under served / at-risk, or lower socio-economic communities. The therapeutic benefits of

non-motorized boating serve many communities including military veterans, and additional costs could inhibit this community from participation.

Having volunteered over the last four years of this bill's development, I don't feel like the OSMB yet fully understands the needs of the non-motorized boating community, and am concerned that this bill is trying to take on too much too early ("non-motorized craft PFD use, an education program, a facilities program, and AIS expansion all in one effort). To know that 40% of the fees raised under this program will go towards enforcement is proof that the OSMB is modeling this program after the existing motorized program (when the non-motorized needs are very different). I think this bill needs more tweaking before it can properly serve the citizens of the state in the way it is intended.

Respectfully,

Sam Drevo

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