

Subject: Testimony for support of HB 2351A

Date:4/16/2019

To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senator Alan Olsen, Co-Chair
Committee Members

We have lived on the Willamette River in a floating home at the Portland Rowing Club for nearly 14 years. We have become very familiar with life along the river. Over the past 3 years I have noticed a very significant increase in abnormally large boat wakes that are damaging life along the river.

The Willamette, up to mile river 50 or so, is a slow moving serene river which is inhabited by an abundance of human and wild life. If you watch the river closely in the morning hours you will see many blue heron fishing along the clear shallow shore lines. Kingfisher move up and the down river foraging for their morning meal. Mink, river otters, and beavers work the evening hours and have become very successful in the Willamette in the past few years. But the growing number of large wake boats has become a threat to the life along the river.

Between 2 PM and sunset the shorelines have become a muddy, unusable environment, to both people and animals. The mud line extends out into the river from the shoreline up to 20 and 40 feet. Paddle borders and kayakers and small craft boaters can barely navigate the river edges because of compounded large wakes that churn the river. Safety has become a big concern.

All floating structures start rocking beyond their design limits and damage is being done to docks, house boats, floating homes, and the infrastructure that keeps the water clean and floating structures safe.

Yes, people that live along the river do not own the river. The river belongs to the people and the riparian wildlife. But it has to be used and managed responsibly. I encourage the Oregon Marine Board to take into consideration all inhabitants of the river as the custodians of the Willamette River.

Oregon population is predicted to grow by at least 20% in the next 10 years. That could mean the river will be used an additional 20% as well. We need to act now to stop damage to the life along the river. No wake zones must be established and protected and boaters need to be educated. Large wake boats need to be allowed on large wake zones on the Columbia and on man-made reservoirs. Save life on the river. Please vote yes to support HB 2351A. And thank you for considering my testimony and working to save our river.

Sincerely,

Rich Morgan