

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

April 30, 2019

Letter sent via email

Subject: HB 2351A
Increased wakes: damage and danger to river users

Dear Senators,

I am the Chairperson of the Board for the Portland Rowing Club (PRC), a boater, a kayaker, a swimmer, and a floating home resident for over 19 years. PRC is located on the Willamette River just south of the Sellwood Bridge. Our moorage has seen a dramatic increase in damage to our homes, floats and decks over the last two years caused by wakes from large vessels and now, the more popular wakeboard boats. Just this last weekend, a wakeboard boat (with its music turned up very loud) passed slowly by our floating homes (300' away) and caused a wake that shook the entire moorage and rocked all the floating homes. The driver had no idea as to the havoc he caused by his wakes as he was down river when the wakes hit our docks. We use to chase them down with our boats to explain the wake issue, but due to 'river rage' we have been told by the sheriff's office not to pursue these boaters, but to call them instead. Enforcement is always hours away.

In another situation last summer, an owner of a wakeboard boat was plowing down the river in front of our moorage just outside of our 'no wake buoys'. They were creating a large wake and I waved them down. They drove over to my deck and said, "Are we doing something wrong?" I said, "Do you realize your wakes are causing damage to our floating homes". They looked at each other and said, "But we were outside the buoys?" They apologized and said they would wake board in other areas of the river.

There is clearly a lack of knowledge and respect of the 'OSMB rules of the river' by some boaters, while some merely don't know the impacts their boats are making to other river users (kayakers, paddle boarders, canoers, and swimmers who are now relegated to early morning hours to recreate), boaters, moorages, and the shoreline. The OSMB needs the authority to regulate the use of these damaging boats. 'No wake' rule is needed, but additional measures need to be addressed by the OSMB. Education, signage and river patrols need to be increased to inform boaters of the impacts of their wakes.

Additionally, one step that can be taken by the OSMB, if authorized, would be to place 'No-Wake Buoys' across the river at various impact areas and moorages, out of the main channel, as a reminder for boaters to be responsible for their wakes. **I know it works.** During the three year period, prior to the last two years of damage to our floating homes, Multnomah County was constructing the Sellwood Bridge. No-Wake Buoys were placed across the river, both up-river and down-river of the bridge to protect the bridge workers. Boaters were respectful and managed their wakes as they passed. Because our moorage was within the County's buoy protection area, we experience little damage to our homes during that period. The damage has increased significantly since the County removed their buoys.

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Page Two

I am asking for your support for HB 2351A currently before the Oregon State Senate. HB 2351A will give the Oregon State Marine Board the local rulemaking authority to make regulations which align with other state agencies to protect the shoreline, marine habitat, and private property along the Willamette River Greenway. It will close a policy gap that allows a small class of river user to cause damage to whole sections of the river.

Rivers need to be safe for all users. We need to stop the 'DAMAGE' to our shoreline, moorages and floating homes. I want to thank you for your time regarding this bill. I am confident, given the authority, that the OSMB can determine suitable, safe, wakeboarding locations on the Willamette River which allow wake boarders portions of the river to recreate without harming or endangering other river users.

All the best,

Richard Aanderud
Chairperson – Portland Rowing Club
100 SE Harney Street - Slip #4
Portland, OR 97202