

Rondi L. Nelson
Camp Skoglund, Inc.
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March 20, 2023

Re: Support for LD 693: "An Act to Protect Inland Water Quality, Shorelines, Wildlife and Public Safety by Prohibiting Operation of a Wake Boat to Create an Enhanced Wake Close to Shore or in Shallow Water "

Dear Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and distinguished members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

My family has lived on and run a business on Echo Lake in Mount Vernon since 1956 - *sixty seven years*. For thirty years we ran a camp for boy's and since then we have operated as a family camp, entertaining guests who come back every year; many for decades and many who were former campers here.

The worst thing that has happened on Echo Lake in the 67 years we have been here is the invasion of ski boats. Our lake has gone so far as to form a Boating Safety Committee to try and encourage good boating practices and clamp down on the disrespectful activities of many boat users - mainly two children's camps.

My property faces the most open area of Echo Lake. During the summer we usually have up to three boats operating in repetitive circles out front, all day, almost every day of the week. The wake boat that is now used is usually *half a mile* from my docks yet it's wake come all the way across, often in the form of whitecaps, to our shore. My docks, boats, and shoreline have been damaged, the guests at my hospitality business have had their experiences damaged and the drone from these loud boats goes on all day long making it nearly impossible to enjoy time on the waterfront. My guests and neighbors cannot safely use kayaks and paddle boards when these boats are out given the surf that is constantly running on the lake. I would estimate that when the wake boat across from us is operating the size and severity of the wake is more than double what it is when one ski boat is out.

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Adding to our problems in recent years is the fact that these camps now use wake boats constantly - claiming that they are a 'must' in order to give their campers the 'most amazing' experiences possible. Wake boats are certainly NOT a must by any means. As a former camp director, there are hundreds of other things to do at summer camp. Basic waterski boats can offer everything that a kid could want when it comes to skiing and the like. Wake boats allow 'surfing' which is a popular fad right now and which cannot possibly be anything that a child comes to camp in Maine specifically to do. Ski boats already overburden many of our lakes, the addition of wake boats will push our lakes beyond their limits. The potential for further lake damage and distress to our wildlife is a fact when it comes to wake boats. The people who are most likely to buy and use these boats are too often people who already overburden our natural resources and show disrespect for our environment. Having been here on Echo Lake all of my life, I have seen the damage to our shoreline and ecosystem and to our personal right to enjoy our properties first hand. There is absolutely no reason to allow wake boats on our lakes, especially the smaller lakes like Echo. You have all read the science and know this already. *We who have to live with it are now telling you.*

Other states are actively addressing this, we need to be the leader.

I encourage you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 693. I also encourage you to think further about Maine's boating laws and the need to update them given the vast changes in watercraft usage.

Respectfully yours,

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