

Jon Waleski  
Echo Lake Association  
LD 693

Members of the legislature,

I am writing to support passage of LD 693. I live on Echo Lake in Mount Vernon and am the current president of the Echo Lake Association (ELA). I am an active kayaker, fisherman and recreational boater. Members of my family also use paddleboards. I believe LD 693 is required for the reasons I will state below.

Erosion is one major concern this bill is needed. The town of Fayette has had to use upwards of 60 yards of rap rock to stabilize Echo Lake Road due to the eroding of land supporting Echo Lake Road. This posed a significant cost to the town of Fayette. Wake boats operated with the current 200' limit generate waves which contribute to this erosion. Other areas of the lake are also being impacted by this as well.

Multiple members of the Echo Lake Association have shared stories about wake boats causing damage to their docks (both floating and fixed). In one case, a wake boat, operated within the 200' no wake zone, caused all her outdoor furniture on her dock to be thrown into the lake. A committee (Boating Safety Committee) not sanctioned by the ELA has also been gathering evidence to hold wake boat operators accountable for their actions on Echo Lake. The two most consistent wake boat operations on Echo come from Camp Laurel and Camp Vega. In their defense, they have tried to accommodate the concerns they receive when those concerns are presented in a reasonable, non-hostile fashion.

I have had two run ins with wake boats, more appropriately with the waves and troughs they create. The first was when I was a passenger on a power boat. The boat went bow first into a trough created by a wake boat that had since passed. The passengers in the bow were nearly thrown out of the boat as it dove into the trough. The second time was when I was fishing in a 12' aluminum boat and had I not seen the wave coming it would have capsized the boat. I no longer kayak when I see that wake boats are in operation. The risk is too great. It seems that when wake boats are in use other persons wanting to use the lake are put in a situation where it's just not practical to do so. Forget about trying to paddle board! Another factor is loon nesting. Wakes generated can destroy nesting sites and or cause loons to leave their nests.

In closing, LD 693 is a good start to rein in the damage wake boats cause. It can be improved by allocating funds to IFW to procure devices like range finders, both laser and radar, to enable wardens to enforce it. Wardens I've spoken with indicate the difficulty of enforcing the current 200' limit. Often, it's just their word verses the errant boaters so no conviction results. A 500' distance would be even harder to prove without some type of verification process.

Thank you for allowing me to address this bill. I hope it passes.

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