

Testimony in opposition of LD 693 by

David Dickerson, Vice President, State Government Affairs

Before the  
Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Chairpersons LaFountain, Landry and committee members,

On behalf of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), I am writing to encourage the committee to not support LD 693, which would greatly restrict wakesurfing.

Instead, we encourage the committee to direct the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) to study the effects of wake boats in Maine, as I understand may be called for in LD 396 as amended.

Taking the time to fully understand the how wake safety zones impact boating access, can be enforced, and where or if they are needed, is an important first step in addressing this issue.

My name is David Dickerson and I am Vice President of State Government Relations at NMMA. By way of introduction, NMMA is the leading trade association representing the recreational boating industry in North America. It is dedicated to industry growth through its promotion of product quality assurance, public policy advocacy, market statistics and research. NMMA member companies produce more than 80 percent of the recreational boats and accessories sold in the U.S. and Canada. In Maine, recreational boating has an estimated direct and indirect annual economic impact of \$2.9 billion, supporting 14,000 jobs and 600 companies, with 112,000 boats registered.

The wake safety zones defined in LD 693 would be well beyond the distances and depths recommend for safe and responsible operation by peer-reviewed studies of wakeboat wakes. That study determined that wakesurfing wakes are only slightly higher than typical boats when they reach shore, if the towboat is at least 200 feet from shore and other objects. We further support education that emphasizes that wakesurfers should operate in waters that are a minimum of 10' deep. We believe this distance and depth are appropriate, and as importantly, are easily understood and followed by boaters.

Allowing time for IFW to study wakesurfing in Maine also will afford time to implement a wakesurf education program. This education program, managed by the Water Sports Industry Association, is an effective program that teaches boaters to minimize their impact on waterways and other users. NMMA will gladly assist in implementing a vigorous "Wake Responsibly" program.

There is time to do it right. If regulations are implemented, they should effective and encourage compliance. Only 14 to 17 wake boats are sold in Maine every year, according to sales data published by NMMA.

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NMMA wholeheartedly believes that education is always the best and most effective first step to impact a problem. We encourage the committee to not support LD 693, but rather to take steps to better understand the issue.

Thank you for considering my testimony.