

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND
WILDLIFE**

IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 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”

Presented by Representative RISEMAN of Harrison.

Cosponsored by Senator CARNEY of Cumberland and Representatives: BOYLE of Gorham, DODGE of Belfast, FAY of Raymond, HASENFUS of Readfield, PLUECKER of Warren, RECKITT of South Portland, SUPICA of Bangor, WARREN of Scarborough.

DATE OF HEARING: March 22, 2023

Good afternoon Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Tim Peabody, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in opposition to **L.D. 693**.

This bill prohibits creating an enhanced wake with a boat that is equipped with wake-enhancing equipment within 500 feet of the shoreline or in waters less than 20 feet deep.

The shoreline setback and minimum water depth operating provisions outlined in this bill will require the ability to ascertain 500 feet from the shore and determine where water is greater than 20 feet deep. As stated in related testimony the Department feels we should look at some of the regional and national information on this topic which would include an analysis of the operation of wake boats along with environmental and enforcement concerns before we discuss any regulatory action for the state of Maine.

Interest in wake boats is more recent and they appear to be relatively uncommon in Maine, and for those who enjoy boating we also know some watercraft are inherently better suited to larger, deeper lakes and ponds where existing waves are greater, where water depths are deeper, and there is more separation of users. The time to manage any relevant concerns of wake boating is now (or the second session of this legislature) before they become well established and more widespread.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.