

March 2023

To: The Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

RE: 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

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Stacey Keefer, Director for the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA), and a resident of Union. MMTA represents over 120 Maine businesses and an industry comprised of boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, marine retailers, and more. Please note the value added to Maine's gross domestic product by the recreational boating and fishing sector, far surpasses the value added by any other outdoor recreation sector (source <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>). The boating industry certainly does not want to cause harm to our important natural resources, but we encourage the Committee to consider if the details of LD 693 are more than what is necessary to operate any and all boats in a responsible manner.

On behalf of the members of MMTA, I would like to encourage the Committee to work with some of our national colleagues from the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA), and Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA) on this topic who have encountered similar proposals in other states and who are more familiar with various wake studies. Last year New Hampshire defeated HB 1071 which was only trying to increase their no-wake zone to 250 feet, not 500 feet.

We would also like to point out that the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) has worked in national collaboration with law enforcement on wake boat topics. We suggest that Maine look at NASBLA's national policy suggestions on wake sports and suggested definition of a wake boat. Please note the language in LD 693 refers to a ballasted boat and technically many sailboats are ballasted boats.

MMTA continues to believe that education and enforcement are both necessary to keep boating safer. Without education, awareness, and enforcement it does not matter what the size no-wake zone is in statute. Last year we had hoped to schedule one of WSIA's "Wake Responsibly" events in Maine but will try again this year. MMTA would not be opposed to an increase in registration fees to help fund more lake wardens, especially in more popular water bodies for wake and towing sports.

MMTA would like to recognize and appreciate that our lakes associations work extremely hard to protect our water resources. They are very organized with their advocacy. We are not aware of any wake boat clubs who might help assist those boat owners with awareness about this legislation. I can say on behalf of a dealer who sells wake boats, that many of his customers could be quite upset if they are suddenly limited to where they can operate a vessel that they

have likely invested over \$200,000 and are given new limitations that may or may not be necessary. This is why MMTA would prefer to support a study as suggested in **LD 379 – An Act to Responsibly Regulate Recreational Boats on Maine Lakes**. We will submit separate testimony on that bill and offer to be a resource for the Committee and the Department to help address concerns about wakes and wake boating.

Respectfully,
Stacey Keefer
Maine Marine Trades Association, Executive Director

