

March 21, 2023

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

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

Hello, my name is Scott Cunningham and I am writing to oppose LD 693 as a full time, year-round resident of 44 years on Pushaw Lake in Penobscot County.

First, it's important to recognize that wake boats are a popular and valuable form of recreation for many people, particularly those who enjoy water sports like wakeboarding and waterskiing. Banning wake boats would deprive these individuals of a cherished pastime and limit their ability to enjoy their time on the water.

Furthermore, it's worth considering that wake boats can have a positive economic impact on local communities. Wake boats are often used in conjunction with other water-based activities like fishing, swimming, and boating, which can attract tourism and generate revenue for local businesses. Banning wake boats could have a detrimental effect on these industries, hurting the economy and the livelihoods of those who rely on them. Furthermore, I know people that would consider moving out of the area if their lake became one that banned the ability to participate in their sport.

Additionally, it's important to consider that there are many factors that can impact wildlife in these lakes, including pollution, overfishing, and habitat destruction. Many wake boat manufacturers have made significant advancements in technology and design to minimize the environmental impact of these vessels. Additionally, many wake boat enthusiasts are responsible boaters who follow safety guidelines and respect other boaters and natural habitats.

In fact, some wake boats are designed with features that can actually reduce their impact on erosion. For example, some models are equipped with ballast systems that distribute weight evenly across the boat, which can help to reduce the size and intensity of the wake. Additionally, some boats are designed with hull shapes that can redirect the flow of water and minimize turbulence, which can further reduce the impact on erosion.

Rather than banning wake boats outright, it may be more appropriate to establish regulations and guidelines to ensure their safe and responsible use. For example, enforcing speed limits, designated no wake zones, and educational programs for proper boat handling and safety could mitigate any negative impact while still allowing for the enjoyment of wake boats. Overall, wake boats are designed with safety in mind, and many include features specifically intended to enhance the safety of riders and other boaters on the water, including slower surfing speeds than a typical boat, and the ability to manually adjust speed and wave for the purpose of safety for all. Furthermore, wake boats typically have more safety features than other boats, including larger mirrors, and propellers being out of reach.

Perhaps the best explanation of this can be described using mathematics. In response to the complaint regarding large waves generated by wake boats, here is the math. Assuming that the boat maintains the same speed and trajectory, the size of the wake generated by a boat 500 feet away from shore in 15 feet of water would likely be significantly smaller than the original 5-foot wake.

The size of a wake decreases as it moves away from the boat due to friction and the dispersion of energy into the surrounding water. It is mathematically safe to say that the wake at 500 feet would likely be much smaller than 5 feet in height when reaching shore. In general, the size of the wake would likely decrease by about 50% every time the distance from the boat doubles. So, at 500 feet away, the wake would likely be around 1.25 feet (15 inches) or less in height when reaching shore.

In summary, a bill banning the use of wake boats on lakes could have unintended consequences on the economy, recreation, and the rights of individuals to engage in a beloved activity and the claims of its destruction are simply not based in fact.

Scott Cunningham, Pushaw Lake Resident

Chandler Guerrette, Pushaw Lake Resident

In Summary:

- Wake boats are a popular and valuable form of recreation for many people
- **Mathematically, the size of the wake greatly decreases by the time it reaches shore**
- Many wake boat manufacturers have made significant advancements in technology and design to minimize the environmental impact of these boats
- Wake boat enthusiasts are responsible boaters who follow safety guidelines and respect other boaters and natural habitats