

David Rosen
Bridgton
LD 693

Testimony in SUPPORT of:

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

As a lifelong science professional, outdoor enthusiast, father of two young children, and fellow boat owner, I am deeply concerned about wake boats' impact on our lakes and ponds. My name is David Rosen; I live in Bridgton, ME. I teach science at Bridgton Academy and live very near several lakes. I also serve as a board member for the Lakes Environmental Association.

I am here today to express my support for LD 693, which would create an enhanced safety zone to accommodate the enhanced wakes created by wake boats. By prohibiting the operation of wake boats in wake surfing mode within 500 feet of the shoreline or in waters less than 20 feet of depth, we can continue to protect inland water quality, shorelines, wildlife, and public safety.

Wake boats are unique watercraft that can produce wakes and waves far more extensive and more powerful than the typical ski boat or runabout. As a result, they demand special considerations be made for their use. For the past 18 months, the Maine Boating Impacts Coalition (MBIC), which I have been part of, has collaborated with and gathered input from engineers, studied scientific peer-reviewed studies, sought input from wake boat owners and property owners across Maine, and invited stakeholders, including Maine Audubon, IF&W, and lake associations across the state, and a local harbor master to join in our conversations to help develop a solution to the environmental and safety concerns presented by enhanced wakes. LD 693 is the result of those inclusive, collaborative discussions.

I want to share my additional concern on behalf of children, swimmers, and beachgoers due to these wakes. While enjoying our Maine waters, I have witnessed 1st hand the life-threatening conditions caused to swimmers and onshore children because of these enhanced wakes. They threaten not only wildlife, shore health, and personal property but are also a safety threat to swimmers. Throughout recent summers, I have unfortunately witnessed many scary and life-threatening situations due to unsafe wake boat use. Swimmers are unaware, resulting in them being swamped as well as docks are shaken well beyond their build specs and often cause users to fall off or lose balance. This act will allow space and depth for most of these waves to dissipate to a safe level before reaching shore.

I am a motorboat owner, outdoor enthusiast, and sensible citizen who wants to acknowledge the fun and uniqueness of wake boats. This is not an attempt to ban them but appropriate legislation to match the technology of these unique crafts. By using scientific peer-reviewed evidence to guide policy, we can best ensure the future of our lakes for our children and family. The University of Minnesota study demonstrated that the current 200 ft safety zone law could not offer protection against the new and enhanced technology of wake boats.

I urge you that now is the time to increase the water safety zone for wake-generating activities. As the sport grows in popularity and as technology continues to increase the size and length of wakes, it will only become more challenging to create a common-sense policy. Passing sound policy now assures that the wake sport industry in Maine can continue to grow and thrive while it protects Maine's water and simultaneously better protects children and swimmers.

Sincerely,
David Rosen
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