

Maine Legislative Hearing
LD 693
Wednesday, March 22, 2023

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To the committee:

I commend Rep. Riseman for submitting LD 693 for consideration. As owners of two lakefront properties, one on Highland Lake in Bridgton and the other on Bunganut Lake in Lyman; this bill is exactly what we need to protect our properties and our families as we share the lakes with others.

On Highland Lake, our property is a small peninsula which is already subject to natural erosion from the prevailing winds out of the northwest. The wake from these boats is far taller (and deeper under the surface) than the largest natural, wind-generated waves we see. Erosion is of great concern; the undermining of the rocky underpinnings of the peninsula is clearly evident. In the past three years the increase in the number of these wake generating boats is alarming. This bill would limit their use to the middle of the deepest part of the lake. I row a racing shell on Highland Lake and a boat on the lake in wake-surfing mode is incompatible with staying upright and safe on a racing shell. I have to time my rows very early in the morning to avoid the wake boats at our end of the lake, even if they only use the part of the lake that would be permitted in LD 693. I try to avoid planing ski boats as well but, while their wake is annoying and somewhat dangerous to safe operation of a rowing shell, I usually can maneuver to avoid being swamped or flipped. This is not true for a wake boat in wake generating mode. If the shell is not flipped, it is surely swamped by such wake. Maine Boating Regulations require operators to consider the effect of their wake on other crafts on the water, but they would generally claim ignorance saying, "I did not see you."

At our property on Bunganut Lake in Lyman, we are in the middle portion of the west shore. The lake is so small, virtually every boat on the lake goes back and forth, repeatedly, past our shore and we take all the wake. The wake boat wake washes over our dock all day long on weekends and the force has bent some of the pipes that support the dock. Our 14' aluminum boat slams against the dock all day and we have difficulty padding it for protection. We could not have an expensive boat there; it would suffer too much damage. Sometimes the wake boat wake washes over the transom and swamps our boat. Of course, after beating up our dock and boat, it slams into the shoreline and the erosion is ongoing. Bunganut is too small a lake for wake boats at all. There might be just enough space for them to run down the middle of the lake with over 500' to either shore and it is probably over 20' deep out there, but the waves will still be big enough when they reach both shorelines to do damage. There are three coves in Bunganut, and LD 693 would appropriately ban wake boats from operating in wake-generating mode in those coves for lack of space and depth. While you may receive opposition to the bill from wake boat owners on Bunganut and other lakes, they are a minority amongst the non-wake boat owning property owners, many of whom likely have not heard about LD 693 in time to have the opportunity to offer testimony to protect the shorelines and the health of the lake bottom.

My family and I fully support and applaud the intentions of LD 693!

Stewart E Sulloway