

**Friday, March 17, 2023**

Re: Support for 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 "

Dear Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and distinguished members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife,

My name is Brian West. I grew up in Philadelphia and Detroit, but spend my summers on my families' camp on Echo Lake in Fayette, Maine. After high school, I moved to Maine for a few years before joining the US Army, so I still call Maine home.

Maine has been my home since I was born in 1968. My mother lived in Maine for about 20 years, but has only missed one summer on Echo Lake since 1942. Echo Lake in Fayette, Maine has been my family's summer home for six generations.

In my 55 years on Echo Lake, I have seen the problems Echo Lake is having as the modern power boats are getting faster, more powerful and are now capable of creating larger and more destructive wakes.

I am one of the lucky ones. My end of the lake is protected by some shallow waters, and we only have one neighbor with a large and powerful ski boat. His boat is not a Wake Boat, but it can operate in a similar fashion creating large wakes for its skiers.

There is noticeable erosion to the shoreline of my property. I have lost count of how many times I've had to repair and/or reset my docks due to the destructive nature of this one boat's wakes. And it is not even capable of producing wakes the size and power that a Wake Boat can do.

I have spoken with this neighbor several times. In fact, several of the other camp owners on our lake have spoken to him several times. In every other aspect, he is a good neighbor. Just not so much with his boat.

When I got involved with Echo Lake's Boat Safety Committee we began discussing and comparing our boating issues with our neighbors. Those with wake boats on their lakes had stories of destroyed shorelines, damaged docks, damaged boats and frightening stories of the large wakes swamping canoes and tossing swimmers around in the water. Many of our meetings end with one or more participant having to leave to pull their boats out of the

water, to prevent damage from a nearby wakeboat. They all mention their kids and grandkids cannot swim while the wake boats are out there due to the large wakes.

I get it though. I've seen Wake Boats in action, and it looks like a LOT of fun. If I was a younger man, I would definitely be out there trying to Wake Surf right along with them. So I understand why these boat owners want their boats. I also understand these boats represent a huge investment for their owners and many of our Summer Camp neighbors feel Wake Boats are a necessary investment to compete with other summer camp programs.

But these boats are very destructive, and very dangerous when used in crowded areas, shallow waters, and or smaller lakes. They are damaging property, eroding shorelines and endangering smaller boats and swimmers. I didn't even mention what they are doing to the wildlife. I haven't seen any studies on it yet, but can you imagine what these large wakes are doing to Loon nesting areas?

LD 693 is a good start towards helping preserve our lakes and waterways. The studies have shown that keeping large wake producing boats at least 500 feet away from shorelines and in at least 20 feet of water helps to minimize some of the damage.

I encourage you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 693. But I also ask that you also consider LD 693 a starting point. As long as you are a member of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife committee, and as long as you are a resident of Maine. I ask that you continue to keep up with the studies that are happening with boating safety, particularly the studies of these Wake Boats. As they produce more information about the dangers these boats produce, the information learned from these studies will help identify areas where they can be operated safely for those who wish to do so. So, please continue reading and learning about these boats so you can ensure legislation can be changed or added to help keep our lakes safe.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for everything you do for our lakes and waterways.

Sincerely,



Brian J. West

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