

Support LD 693: Protect Water Quality, Shorelines, Wildlife and Public Safety

Summary: This bill (*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*) prohibits boats purposefully generating enhanced wakes within 500 feet of shorelines and in waters less than 20 feet deep. This will reduce wake-caused erosion and sedimentation, keep lake water clean, protect fragile lakeside habitat, and keep shallow waters safe for families, swimmers, and other boaters. This is not a ban on wake activities and only applies when boats are using wake-enhancing equipment.

Join fellow lake advocates in supporting this common-sense policy to protect fragile shorelines, water quality, lake health and safe recreational opportunities for everyone.

Speak up at the Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 22nd at 1:00 p.m.

In person: Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, Cross Building Room 206

Via Zoom: Register at www.legislature.gov (More details at www.lakes.me/advocacy)

We support Maine's boating community, but we are concerned about the unintended consequences of boats with enhanced wake-generating equipment operating too close to shore and in shallow water. This bill is a sensible measure to assure that wake surfers and other wake sport enthusiasts can enjoy their activities in areas of our lakes where there are far fewer risks to lake health, shoreline erosion, wildlife habitat, personal property, and public safety.

How are wake boats different?

Wake boats¹ are specialized boats designed to create large wakes for the purpose of wake sports such as wake boarding and wake surfing.

- These powerful boats are equipped with ballast tanks and often mechanical systems designed to enhance the size of the boat's wake.
- The large wakes created by these boats allow people to surf behind them without tow ropes.

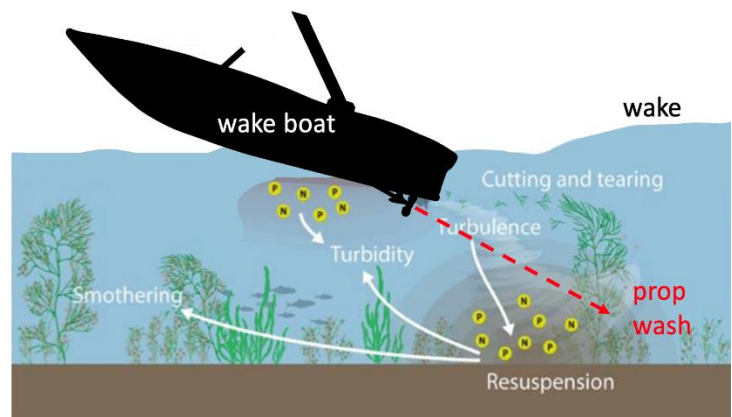
How do excessive wakes close to shore put our lakes at risk?

Large wakes erode shorelines and damage fragile wildlife habitat.

- The large wakes from wake surfing activities take 500 feet or more to dissipate to levels typical of recreational boats on plane². Large wakes simply need more distances to dissipate.
- The current 200-foot boater safety zone is not big enough for boats generating larger wakes.
- Large wakes hitting the shoreline undercut banks and stir up sediment (thereby degrading water quality). They also wash over docks, and can be a hazard to young swimmers and nonmotorized boaters

Wake-surfing boats stir up more sediment than other recreational boats.

- Wake-surfing requires the boat to plow water at slow speeds versus boats operating on-plane. Downward directed propellers can disturb the lake bottoms and stir up sediments.



Clean lakes are valuable assets to local community members and recreational users.

- University of Maine studies have shown that property values drop with decrease water quality.³
- Income for local communities depend on clean and healthy lakes for all to use and enjoy.

Wake surfing is growing in popularity.

- The wake surf industry is rapidly growing, with sales in the first quarter up 62% compared to the first quarter of 2019.⁴
- Boat sales in Maine increased dramatically during the pandemic but are now tapering off with the exception of Wake Surf boats and pontoon sales

This bill will protect clean water, human safety, and wildlife habitat by:

- Promoting wake-generating activity away from shore, in deeper water where the experience is better for the wake surfer⁴
- Ensuring safe access for all people who enjoy Maine's beautiful lakes and ponds
- Reducing shoreline erosion from unnaturally large man-made wakes
- Minimizing sediment and nutrient resuspension (which causes algal blooms) in near-shore, shallow water
- Protecting fish spawning beds and loon and waterfowl nesting sites

Boating is a wonderful way to enjoy Maine's lakes. We want all boaters to share our public lake resources and to boat responsibly to protect shorelines and water quality. For most boats, the current 200-foot "boater safety zone" (also known as the "no-wake zone") protects lake health and shoreline stability.

However, for large wake sport activities, 200 feet from shore is not enough distance to allow wakes the space they need to dissipate.

Boaters can better enjoy wake sports, and quality wakes, in deeper water further from shore.

We need your voice to speak for lake health, wildlife and safety.

For directions on submitting written testimony and for registering to get a Zoom link to testify before the committee, visit www.lakes.me/advocacy,

For the most impact, please consider testifying before the committee on Jan. 30th. FMI visit website

Questions? Reach out to Susan Gallo, Executive Director of Maine Lakes any time at sgallo@lakes.me.

References and Links:

- 1 <https://community.nasbla.org/viewdocument/policy-position-on-wake-boats>
- 2 <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/226190>
- 3 https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=aes_miscreports
- 4 <https://www.nmma.org/press/article/24023>
- 5 <https://www.luxuo.com/cars/yachting/whats-the-best-water-depth-for-wake-surfing.html>



FRIENDS of the
COBBOSSEE
WATERSHED

