



Testimony of Jay White and Kent Henderson Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds on S.86

April 7, 2021

Good afternoon Madame Chair and members of the committee.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Jay White and I am a Board Member of the [Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds](#). I also own a seasonal residence on Lake Champlain, North Hero Vermont. I am currently a member of the Pelots Bay Restoration Association (PBRA) and board member of PBRA.

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation, promotion, and development of environmental quality standards for Vermont lakes and ponds through communication with local lake and pond organizations.

The Federation asks the committee to *oppose* S.86. Our concerns relate to the language in the bill proposing to extend the time period out-of-state vessel owners must purchase a Vermont validation sticker from 30 to 60 days. We believe such action will result in:

- a loss of revenue (We have asked the Department of Motor Vehicles for vessel revenue data—in and out of state—but have yet to receive this data,)
- a decrease in motorboat registration revenues reduces vital funding needed to maintain the strength and success of the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) [Aquatic Nuisance Control Program](#) and Department of Fish and Wildlife enforcement of aquatic nuisance control laws and regulations
- a reduction in out-of-state vessel owner education related to aquatic invasive species (the Department of Motor Vehicles by [statute \[23 V.S.A. § 3305\(k\)\]](#) provides this critical information via vessel registrations)—aquatic invasive species can result in negative environmental effects, habitat loss and a reduction in native species biodiversity, adverse social and economic impacts, and public health and safety consequences
- an increase in aquatic invasive species threats to Vermont waters—research supports the number one vector of aquatic invasive species spread from waterbody to waterbody is by humans via trailered recreational watercraft transport

Please consider the following:

- Like Vermont's current law, New Hampshire's law for registering out-of-state vessels is 30 consecutive days ([NH 270-E:4 Exemptions from Registration](#)).
- By [statute \(10 V.S.A. § 1451\)](#), Vermont has committed to implementing an aquatic nuisance control policy to prevent the infestation and proliferation of invasive species and adequately respond and manage new introductions by providing the means, staffing and funding necessary to protect the state's aquatic ecosystems).



- Only one full-time permanent DEC staff person remains assigned to oversee aquatic invasive species prevention, management and control for Vermont's 800+ lakes and ponds, down from three permanent positions in 2012.
- DEC's [Aquatic Nuisance Control grant program](#) is critical to local efforts to control aquatic invasive species. By [statute \(23 V.S.A. § 3319\)](#), DEC receives 37% of annual motorboat registration funds, 20% of which supports this grant program and the balance DEC uses for other aquatic nuisance control-related costs.
- While available grant funds to municipalities for aquatic invasive species management remain relatively level, demand has increased steadily—in the number of grants awarded and higher budget requests—spreading the funds more thinly. For the past few years, municipal requests for grant funds have **totaled over \$2 million**.
- Even with municipal grant awards, the day-to-day burden and high expense of managing and controlling aquatic invasive species infestations in Vermont's freshwater resources fall on municipalities, local volunteers, and lake associations.
- Aquatic invasive species do not adhere to state and provincial boundaries; many not yet confirmed in Vermont are in neighboring states and provinces knocking on Vermont's doors.
- Preventing aquatic invasive species introductions is the best and least costly means of effective control.
- The ecological, recreational, and commercial impacts of invasive species in Vermont waters can result in millions of dollars of loss and damage and adverse effects on these freshwater resources and Vermont communities' property values.
- The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds recognizes the need for sustainable revenue sources to support aquatic invasive species management in Vermont. Other states supplement control and spread prevention efforts with revenue from mandatory boat decals as a user-fee-based approach (*see attachment*). Revenue gained from a boat decal program targeting non-resident users of Vermont's public waters could significantly support prevention efforts.

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds believes that any lengthening of the time out-of-state boats are permitted to use Vermont waters without registration endangers the state's precious water resources' quality and health. We encourage Vermont to sustain its commitment to protecting its waters.

Thank you for consideration and attention to this critical matter.

Attachment: 2021 AIS Revenues Chart by State .pdf