

## **New wake boat regulations:**

I am a native Vermonter, sixty-five years old. I am writing to state my opposition to additional restrictions being placed upon wake boats in Vermont lakes. My family has been enjoying wake sports on Vermont lakes for nearly two decades. Despite being labeled by some who oppose wake sports as a wealthy segment of boaters, I can attest to this not being the case. We are hard-working Vermonters. My wife is a school teacher, and I am a builder. We are on our third boat designed for water sports, only because we save our hard-earned money and care well for our boats, allowing them to hold value in trade. Our current boat is 12 years old.

Our family has a place to gather on the water in our boat. When our kids were teenagers, they and their friends were a captive audience taught to respect the rules and the environment on the water while trying and learning new sports. Our grandchildren are now a part of the mix on our boat. We are committed to enjoying our time on the water together. Annually, our boat is one of the first ones put in and the last ones taken out of the lake.

New regulations were adopted on Vermont lakes a year or so ago. We continue enjoying our time on our boat with perhaps a heightened sense of playing by the *new* rules. We have never been involved in a dispute with anyone on the lake or been approached by law enforcement due to how we operate on the water. We are conscious of our distance from shore and other users of the lake while we operate our boat. Safety of our group and others is second nature. We use our boat for fun and don't see this being at the expense of others. We had a grandfather and his grandson neighbor at the lake who would paddle out on their SUPs most days when we shoved off to play in our wave when we passed by. On many occasions, kayaks and PWCs follow us around waiting to play in our wake. We are mindful of keeping a safe distance per the current regulations and don't need to have a 500-foot zone or 3,000-foot run rule adopted in order to continue to do so.

The lake is used by people of many different interests. We embrace all. If it gets too busy on the water for us to enjoy what we do safely, we take a break. We leave the lake for the myriad of craft to race back and forth and go in circles pulling tubes and inflatable couches. It's not our thing and not our place to tell them it should be theirs. Fast bass boats and loud power boats aren't our thing either. We had a loud, fast boat years ago; it lost its appeal for us. We prefer to listen to good conversation and the laughter of our family and friends.

During the first public forum we attended debating the use of wake boats, I listened to the comments of an older gentleman from the central part of the state. He remarked how when he was a boy, once chores on the farm were done, Dad would take everyone to the lake and pull them behind the family boat on anything that would float. He remarked how he could not see how folks who chose to play behind a wake boat could be told by anyone that they can not.

Summers are short in the Northeast. Why the concerns of a few anti-wake sports people are threatening how others choose to enjoy their summers on our lakes is unreasonable. Snow skiers were anti-snowboarding in the 90s. Safe to say snowboarding helped to save the ski industry, bringing a whole new segment of folks to our mountains. I am president of our local snowmobile club. Our club maintains and grooms nearly fifty miles of trails in the town of Chittenden. The majority of these trails are on National Forest lands. These trails share this resource with a cross-country ski area and multiple points of access to the public for mixed use. Hikers, snowshoeing, fat biking, and dog sleds share the trails with snowmobiles. These uses may not seem compatible to some, but we figure out how to coexist and enjoy the resource in our own way. Each sees how they choose to do so as their "normal use".

Vermont is a beautiful place for residents and visitors to recreate in a diverse way. Cyclists deserve the right of way on our roads, so we make way. The group of anti-wake boat voices seems to be like the anxious driver who fists the horn and blazes by the biker who's just exercising their right to ride on our roads. Snowboarders aren't scraping all the snow off the slopes, and wake boats aren't killing nesting shore birds, eroding our shorelines more than Mother Nature, or putting other lake users at risk. We are just out to enjoy our time on the water with family and friends in our own way.

Respectfully, Dave Dutton