

LCAR Public Waters Rule Hearing, 5/14/26
Phil Dodd, Montpelier

I endorse the expansion of the minimum size for wakesports zone and the prohibition of wakesports within 500 feet of others lake users.

In my opinion, the inland lakes in Vermont are too small to handle wakesports. Wakeboats erode shorelines, stir up phosphorous, disturb plants on lake bottoms, and adversely impact wildlife. These boats make more sense on large lakes like Champlain and Memphremagog and maybe Bomoseen.

In addition, the large wakes generated by these boats are potentially dangerous for others enjoying traditional uses like paddling, fishing, swimming and sailing. The problem will only get worse as the number of wakeboats increases and bigger and more powerful wakeboats are built.

Wakeboats are not a normal use as defined in the Use of Public Waters rule, which defines a normal use as “any lawful use of any specific body of public water that occurred on a regular, frequent, and consistent basis prior to January 1, 1993.” By this definition, wake boats are clearly not a normal use, and their use should be restricted to protect the normal and traditional uses that were in place in 1993.

I own and use a lightweight 12-foot pack canoe, as well as a Sunfish that I trailer to Vermont lakes. A sudden, big wave could easily capsize my canoe or Sunfish. The same could happen to my 7- and 9-year-old granddaughters, who have their own small kayaks.

The proposed prohibition on conducting wakesports within 500 feet of other lake users will help to decrease the risks to me, my granddaughters, and other lake users.

The statute authorizing the Use of Public Water Rules, 10 VSA §1421, says “the purpose of the rules shall be to further the maintenance of **safe** and healthful conditions.” This rule change will increase safe conditions on the lakes where wakesports will be allowed and therefore I fully endorse it.

I am not a lakefront property owner, though I suspect most wakeboat owners are. In considering this rule change, please keep in mind the majority of Vermonters who do not own or cannot afford lakefront property and who should be allowed and encouraged to get out and enjoy our lakes in whatever boat they own, however small.