Dear Members of the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules that would further restrict enhanced wake operations and remove additional lakes from eligibility.

Vermont already adopted some of the strictest wake sports regulations in the country in 2024. Those rules were the result of years of public discussion, scientific review, and compromise. Wake sports were limited to only a small fraction of Vermont lakes, with setback and depth requirements already in place. Moving from 30 eligible lakes down to only 18 only a short time after the original rules were implemented is excessive and unfair to current boat owners and lake users who already adjusted to the previous regulations.

I understand the importance of protecting water quality, shorelines, wildlife, and invasive species prevention. Those concerns matter to everyone who uses Vermont lakes responsibly. However, the proposed changes go beyond reasonable regulation and move toward effectively eliminating the activity from many communities without sufficient long-term data showing that the current rules have failed.

Restricting wake sports to even fewer lakes may also create unintended consequences by concentrating activity into a smaller number of water bodies instead of distributing use more evenly. In addition, many Vermont families and businesses have already invested substantial money into equipment, marina services, docks, and recreation based on the current rules adopted just two years ago.

I encourage LCAR to reject or delay these proposed changes and allow more time to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing 2024 regulations before implementing significantly broader restrictions. Vermont should focus on enforceable education, invasive species prevention, and responsible operation standards rather than continually shrinking access for one specific user group.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wyatt McLaughlin