

Summary of verbal comments provided at public meetings for Vermont Use of Public Waters Rules rulemaking

Public Meeting 1: January 27, 2026: Brandon Town Hall

[Recap: Hold for UPW Public Meeting in Brandon Tuesday, January 27 | Meeting | Microsoft Teams](#)

The comments were split between those who supported the rules, those who feel that the rules don't go far enough, and those who are against any additional rulemaking. For those who feel that the rules don't go far enough, the main concerns were safety and spread prevention. For those who oppose the proposed rules, the main concerns are that not enough time has passed for the rules adopted in 2024 to be scrutinized, the decision-process used to determine the proposed wakesports zone definition, and the implementation of a 500-foot safety offset.

The following list provides a representative sampling of verbal comments provided during the public meeting.

- More powerful motors over the years. Safety concerns for swimmers/canoeing. Wise plan to increase threshold to 100.
- Strongly oppose removal of home lake rule, withdrawal of wakeboat decon proof, addition of the 14 day quarantine loophole, and addition of severe language limiting greeter communication. Only ~40 wakeboats (on remaining 18 lakes) would need to register. Anyone can say they've been out of the water for 14 days. Loophole. Limits greeters to not being able to turn boaters away, These changes in these parts of the rule are scientifically and factually unsupported and fiscally irresponsible.
- priorities should be on spread prevention. State lacks ability to decontaminate wakeboats. 14 day dry time concerns. Home lake rule with some modifications. Not okay with grey areas with size thresholds
- deeply involved for 3 years. Wants to see the scientific evidence for changes to 2024 rules – specifically the change in wakesports zone size – 100 acre and 3000 ft. Undermines public trust. Current rules only in place for a year
- concern about process. Feels like state is responding to public interest groups and not on scientific evidence. Data does not show problems. No documented incidents. 2024 rule already one of most restrictive in nation.

- President of Seymour. Concerns about AIS. Home Lake rule should be retained. Certification should be required, but no decontamination facilities available. Cannot wait 10 years for this protection.
- lake parker. Support all the revisions, specifically the 100 acre wakesports zone. Do not support exceptions to the 100 acre threshold. Supports the 500 ft offsets. Thinks the depth should be increased to 30 feet.
- not agree with any changes to the rules. Think they need more time to get used to current rules. Doesn't think 500 feet is safe/reasonable. Feels like voices are not being heard
- lake bomoseen – do not support new regs against wakeboats. No justification, scientific evidence, or documented violations from previous. AIS – very few stations available, but really supportive to expand.
- wake boaters are being villainized. Majority of wakeboats don't move from lake to lake. Biggest problem are fishing boats. Why are we allowing multi-lake fishing tournaments
- – wakeboat operator. Enjoys wakesports with his grandkids. Abiding by rules, no documented violations. Continuing to move the goal post.
- Lake Bomoseen – don't support new regs. Safety point of view. No reports of violations. Speed large factor on water. Wakeboats travel slow. If a kayak were to enter the 500 ft space, it would be really difficult and possibly unsafe for a wakeboat to stop or move out of the way
- involved in process – rules should not change. The 2024 regs should be the same. Family has been publicly villainized and yelled at. Wakesurfing since 2009 at Lake Fairlee. Been good stewards for the lake, supporting the greeter program
- – lake st catherine – shout out to Laura. Sympathy for folks who think wakesports are bad for their lake. Disagrees. For the most part, thinks wakesports at the low speeds they go are more safe. Cant legislate good judgement. Most of boats stay on one lake. Wish we had decontamination more.
- Science magazine refers to Zebra mussels as catastrophic. Minnesota study “zebra mussel best friend”. Concern for the 18 lakes left on list. Hot water decon not readily available- only 3 on Lake Champlain, but not sufficient. 14 day dry time is not adequate. No timeline or funding for WID plan.
- I support DEC's proposed rule. Still concerned about AIS, but this is great step forward. Wakesports is not a normal use. Rules should be managed to provide for normal uses to the best extent possible. Wakeboats cannot share the waters with others. Rules maintains wakesports on larger ponds

- I wasn't aware there was such a conflict. Sad to him, spend summers on Lake Willoughby, all sorts of users on lake. Don't agree with change to Home lake rule. Undo pressure put on 18 lakes. Wants to keep home lake to only neighbors.
- wake boat owner on Lake Bomoseen. Go and talk and talk to your neighbors. Demographics of wakeboat owners... expensive boats, not reckless teenagers. Takes offense to people thinking wakeboat owners are irresponsible. Never traveled between lakes. 90% of lakeshore are houses. No loon nesting there.
- DEC's mission statement. Protect for future generations. These boats not going to accomplish that goal. Rules should go further. Without the decon/certification, asking for AIS spread. Maybe wakeboat owners should pony up and pay for decon stations.
- – Willoughby – no enforcement. Never seen any enforcement. Greeter program a joke... says if a person doesn't want to be approached, then don't approach.
- – own camp on Lake Iroquios. Evident new rules are needed. Wakesports are fun, but small part of recreation. 18 lakes are more than enough. Rules protect 13 smaller lakes. Please move forward with this rule
- – lifelong Vermonter, watersports enthusiast, supporter of wakesports, that gets people of all ages out. Opposed to new rules. Already stringent enough. Need to enhance are unwarranted. Continual rule expansion without demonstrated need erodes public trust. Existing rules have balance, new rules out of balance
- – live on lake Iroquois – 11 years. Wakesports family. But does other sports too. Use boat only 25 hours a year. Oppose rules. Don't understand the 3000 foot rule. Use half that length when balancing other uses. 3 other boat owners on lake don't go anywhere. Think there's technology that
- opposed to new rules. 2024 rules haven't had a chance. Wakeboats get drained every time get hoisted up on trailer. 500 ft radius is a big problem.
- Oppose rules – for 75 years. No violations. Should alarm every boater in Vermont. AIS/loons/sediments scientific points. Proposed 3000 ft and 100 acre limit not reasonable. 500 ft safety offset will invite more conflict. Concern for other users purposely entering
- live on Lake Bomoseen since 2017. Lots of different users. Not a wakesport owner. Opposed to continued pressure to what he sees as responsible use. Same complaints as the beginning. What has changed? Protect recreational rights of Vermonters the same as other protections. Not been long enough to see if rules working

- Live in Thetford, use Lake Fairlee. Enjoyed lake for many years. Safety concerns for waves impacting swimming. Other motorboats seem respectful, mindful, but wakeboaters don't seem to notice them. Didn't know how to report
- Pittsford Vermont resident, enjoys Lake Bomoseen – opposed rule changes. Already have most restrictive rules in nation. Why would we look to change when data doesn't support. 500 ft safety zone. Understand the 200 ft. but 500 ft not practical- doesn't see how it can be enforced. Worried about not being able to control other users
- lifelong Vermonter. Lake bomoseen – wake boat owner with property on lake. Opposed to rule changes. Most wake boat owners he knows keep their boats on the lake. Objective data to show boat owners are safe operators. ANR should cross-reference boat owner registrations with property owner data.
- 10 years on Lake Bomoseen – object to new regulations. No documented issues.
- taxpayer and property owner on Bomoseen – use lake for all kinds of watersports/recreation. Strongly oppose new regulations – not scientifically based in fact. As a trained scientist, use facts. Since 2024 changes, not aware of any new data that supports these new changes. increased safety risk by concentrating boats from 30 to 18 lakes.
- 30 years on Bomoseen – opposed to changes in wakesports rules. Wakeboats can operate in wakesports mode. Why are increased safety buffer when the wakesports mode is on and boat is going very slow? Not convinced wakeboats are the problem. 300 wakeboats in Vermont. There are 27,000 other boats in Vermont
- Resident on Lake Bomoseen – wakesurfer – oppose rules. Anger and frustration pointed in wrong direction. More problems with other motorboats.
- Supports safety on the water, but do oppose changes. Increasing the lake size, what data supports 100 acres? 3000 ft surf requirement – no data. 500 ft buffer from other users – unclear how this will be measured or enforced in water. Fairness and consistency issues with AIS. Vermont should have requirements for all watercraft.
- Wakeboat owner on lake bomoseen 15 years. Recreation with kids respectfully. Think current regs are targeting wakeboat populations unfairly. Oppose regulations. Other watercraft not being held to same standards. Can appreciate that smaller bodies of water would have difficulties. Dont think AIS/erosion issues are valid
- biggest thing that sticks out to him is 500 ft limit. As a wakeboat owner, this will cause confusion, possible safety issues. AIS – talking about a tiny tiny percent of boats. Decon funding needs to be figured out.
- the wakeboat owners on Lake Fairlee – feel attacked. Not sure why. If issue is zebra mussels, then lets find out. There are lots of problems on lake – lots to focus on

- – lots of talk about regulations. Without enforcement, they're just suggestions. Up to the state to enforce their own property. How does DEC intend to manage this? DEC needs to step up.
- – 10 year resident. Greeter. Lake Raponda. Focus on what we can agree on. Suggestion for DEC. Science could be applied. Several blue ribbon studies group consensus – every 5 years – incorporate stakeholder group, to accommodate changes to science. Science progresses
- – opposed to regulations and additional regs. Stress that 500 ft will be confusing. Doesn't make sense. Don't think it will be enforceable.
- – property owner on lake bomoseen 14 years. Don't support new regs
- – concern with new rules. Not applying to every boat on lakes. Wakeboats are small percentage. Oppose rule changes.
- – swimmer over 50 years on Echo lake, willoghby. Nearly killed by wakeboat on Willoughby. Hydraulic displacements not normal. Wakeboat owners not admitting to science. Radical machines are not normal use.

From Chat:

- - Why is everyone harping about decontamination from wake boats?? All boat traveling from lake to lake need to decontaminate!
- - How do wakeboats not support the conservation? All boats both motor and non motor boats introduce invasive species.
- - If the current rule is creating designated "wake zones" where a boat is allowed to operate in wake mode, then for true safety consistency, under the 2024 rule, those same zones should also be restricted from non-motorized users and swimmers entering these zone while wake activity is occurring. You cannot place the entire safety burden on the wake boat operator while still allowing kayaks, paddleboards, canoes, floaters, or swimmers to enter that same active tow zone. If the concern is safety, then the rule should reflect how tow sports actually work:
 - A wake boat operator cannot suddenly stop while towing a surfer or rider
 - The rider is outside the boat, which limits maneuverability
 - Other lake users entering the zone create unpredictable risk, not the wake activity itself
 - If a boat is permitted to perform a specific activity in a defined area, then that activity zone should be treated similarly to a waterski course, race course, or regatta area — meaning other users should not enter during operation.
- - Jack and all in the room, You've stated that science and current data are the most important factors in this discussion. We agree completely — facts and verified

research should be the foundation of any rulemaking. As a group, we have repeatedly asked for the scientific evidence supporting the proposed changes. Tonight, while comments from another speaker were being read, it was stated that “evidence shows” a 3,000-foot length and 1,000-foot width are required for wakesport activity. We are respectfully asking that this evidence be provided to us for review. To date, we have not seen research or Vermont-based studies that establish those specific dimensions. It was also stated that wakeboats are the fastest-growing segment of the boating market. Again, we ask that the data source for that claim be shared. Manufacturer and industry sales reports we have reviewed show growth led by fishing boats and pontoons. If different information is being used to guide policy decisions, it is important that it be transparent and verifiable. There appear to be many claims being presented as facts, but without source documentation or peer-reviewed research. If science and data are driving these proposals, then the supporting evidence should be clearly available to the public and stakeholders. We would appreciate receiving the studies, data, and sources referenced so we can review the same information being used in this process.

- - You can't have a shared rule/responsibility with different standards. Both need to be the same. A non-wakeboat can operate within the 200-500' range but the wakeboat can't while ballasted. It unfairly puts the onus on the boat with a surfer (the less maneuverable). Keep it at 200' for both.
- - How far off shore are people swimming? They also have to be aware that they are an issue

Public Meeting 2: February 4, 2026: VTrans Dill Building, Barre

[Recap: UPW Rulemaking Public Meeting in Barre Wednesday, February 4 | Meeting | Microsoft Teams](#)

The comments were split between those who supported the rules, those who feel that the rules don't go far enough, and those who are against any additional rulemaking. For those who feel that the rules don't go far enough, the main concerns were safety and spread prevention. For those who oppose the proposed rules, the main concerns are that not enough time has passed for the rules adopted in 2024 to be scrutinized, the decision-process used to determine the proposed wakesports zone definition, and the implementation of a 500-foot safety offset. Additionally, several people provided comment about specific concerns at Lake Fairlee, which would no longer be wakesports-eligible under the proposed rules.

- – wake boat owners she knows are supportive of Home Lake rule. False narrative about not enough resources. Only 40 wakeboats need to be identified on the 18 remaining lake. 14 day quarantine loophole
- president of board of directors of camp lockhearn on lake Fairlee. Oldest camps in U.S. Size and layout not conducive to wakesports, strongly support the 100 acre threshold. Not supportive of even one wakesport user.
- Vermont resident, lake Fairlee cabin owner. Public safety not addressed before. A matter of physics and geometry. Wakesports zone barely wide enough. Fear based avoidance can impact lack of complaints or conflicts document
- cannot support removal of Home Lake rule. Propose temporary moratorium on wakeboats
- 50 year resident of Waterbury- support the proposed changes in the rule. Based on scientific facts.
- Native Vermonter, Waterbury resident. Support ANR's changes, but don't go far enough. AIS concerns.
- East Montpelier, skier, paddler, sailor. Rules fall short. Rules should limit to the largest lakes. Support DEC's compromise rule. A few years ago, was capsized by a wakesport wave.
- – oppose the new rules. AIS spread is from overall boat traffic. Safety issues with ski boats, better boater education needed. 2024 rules are good.
- – support new draft. Emplore DEC to look carefully at the higher distance from shore and depth. New science – pay attention to. Change 14 to 30 day dry time per scientific data.
- – ecological studies showing impacts to shorelines, littoral zones, lake bottom disruption. No wakesports shallower than 30 feet depth
- – Lake Rhaponda, represents RWVL – strongly support DEC's rules. Address safety concerns on smaller lakes, and improved WQ. Minimum depth of 30 feet depth, 700 foot buffer. Do no harm precautionary principal.
- – DEC denied 9 petitions and committed to addressing shared concerns. Some scientific studies indicate we're not going far enough. Disappointed about Home Lake Rule
- – Lake Willoughby. AIS spreads quickly. Prohibition of wakeboats until decon infrastructure in place. No reports of problems because there's no mechanism or ability to report.
- – very concerned about proposed rules. Not enough time since 2024 . Concerned about 3000 foot run. Based on assumption. Question – what environmental impacts does 3000 ft run help with?

- – oppose legislation. From scientific perspective. Specifically, wants to know what Vermont field studies conducted? Scientifically significant? No data.
- Rutland, Bomoseen. AIS from a research point of view. Does DEC have a study that wakeboats pose a higher threat than the volume of other boats? Enforcement already a challenge. Whats been done with 2024. Think Home Lake Rule is a good idea, but state needs to take a stronger role.
- – necessity of increasing buffer. 2024 rule hasn't been in place long enough. No incident data.
- – please keep 2024 rules in place. AIS shouldn't be focused on one type of boat. Most important risk factor is the frequency of movement of boats, not type of boat.
- – Peacham pond, 27 years. Flat water kayaker. Support proposed changes. Point out additional responsibilities for wakeboat operators. Protecting only the loon nest is not sufficient. Loon chicks wander around the lake. Should make operators responsible for avoiding loons
- – lifelong Vermonter. Opposed to proposed changes- increase in acreage, length. Etc. No new data. What Vermont data shows the 2024 rules are inadequate?
- – oppose new restrictions – use of wakeboats – no new evidence showing existing rules not sufficient. Fishing tournaments more dangerous.
- – 19 year old wakesurfer. 500 ft proposal – what data supports need for this.
- – no need for additional restrictions over whats currently in place. Policy should not exceed evidence
- Vermont boat owner. Degree in science. Do not support changes. what research has been done in Vermont to support changes
- – oppose changes – oppose 500 ft buffer zone. Wind waves? (storms) Sometimes exceed wakesports waves. Have we compared?
- – speaking for 1% of boaters who are being blamed for 100% of the problem.
- – oppose new rules – AIS considerations. Focus on all vessel types. Frequency of movement more of a factor. Question – what data shows higher risk for wakeboats?
- – 3000 ft run requirement. Based on FAQs, based on speed/time. Question about connection to environmental impact or safety improvement. 500 ft buffer zone
- – against new rule changes – wakesurfer and boater. Compromised on last set of rules. AIS all over the other types of boats.
- – asked for data that validates the need for additional restriction. Should be fact checking claims.
- – has cottage next door to Diane Lehder- severely disabled. Concerned for safety. Supports rules, particularly for safety.

- – Lake Bomoseen – oppose new regulations – double standard with 500 ft. who's at fault if something happens?
- – represent craftsbury, glover – shadow lake, Caspian, and parker- these rules ecologically responsible. Caspian still at risk. Stand up for quiet waters.
- – what scientific evidence does DEC have? Need Vermont specific evidence based trials. Opposed changes
- – oppose 2024 rules, but accepted. Kayakers should pay
- – oppose wake rules. 2024 fine. Need Vermont field data.
- – cabot on Joes pond. In favor of the rules. Would remove Joes. Precautionary principle should be applied.
- – Parker. No resident wakeboats on Parker. Support rules except removal of Home Lake Rule. Concerned decon infrastructure not available. Should increase depth to 30 ft.
- – represents watersports industry. 2024 made Vermont most restrictive in nation. Explain why doubled acreage. No evidence to support. Statute requires least restrictive approach
- – NE govt relations manager at marine manufacturers industry – oppose rules. Answer is education not regulation.
- – speaking for Yutaka – camp billings lake fairlee– support rules
- – oppose changes. 11 other states comparison. Wind waves impacts. Question – aren't going to take into account numbers opposed?
- – opposed. Wakesurfer family. Live in Chittenden next to reservoir. But never put boat in it. Too small and too many loons impacts.
- – Fairlee property owner – don't support. Nothing changed since original rules passed. Why changes
- – missing the boat, literally. Need to inspect all boats. 3000 run rule unmanageable.
- – grew up on Bomoseen. Against changes. 50-100 acre no reason. Need to have documented conflicts.
- – safety wasn't considered in 2024. Anr resonded to petitions in a statewide rulemaking effort. Not moving goal posts. Absence of formal reports does not mean conflicts don't exist
- – Willoughby 50 years. Like quiet, safe. Proposed rules try to maintain those values. Don't see any enforcement. Greeters don't inspect. Shouldn't be IF an inspection station available/open
- – 2024 rules wasn't a compromise it was a starting point, smaller lakes need to be protected. Analogy to regs on trucks
- – endorse expansion of WSZ size and 500 ft safety distance.

- Urge DEC to adopt rules without carveouts. Single wakeboat dominates entire area. Protecting shared access.
- – Lake Willoughby – strongly support rules. Need home lake rule as previously defined.
- –. Support rules. Concern about AIS. Safety distance seems like a compromise. All boats should be cleaned. Impossible for Greeters to see zebra mussel veligers. Dry time concerns.
- – support rules, but no nuance for lake fairlee. Inexperienced paddlers
- – spent summers on Lake Fairlee. Strongly support rules, without exception
- – member of Thetford select board – lake Fairlee. No one's been hurt yet, but kids have been knocked over. Don't need to wait for scientific studies. Cant compromise.
- opposed to rules. Enjoyed surfing safely. More focus on larger issue of AIS
- – executive director of Aloha foundation, support proposed rules without carve out.
- – Thetford. Makes sense to ban wakesurfing on lake fairlee and other small lakes
- – Thetford select board. 4 camps close around the wakesports zone. Cant allow the one good wakeboat. If you allow one you have to allow them all
- – Castleton, statements based on emotion. What trials have been conducted. Policy without evidence is dangerous.
- – Greeter at Lake Fairlee. Have had many incidents, not just wakeboats. Had an outsider wakeboater, came close to a fisherman and a wave topped over the boat and they had to bail the water. Support the proposal.