

Opposition to Proposed Wake Boat Regulation Changes

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to respectfully express my opposition to the proposed changes to Vermont's wake boat regulations. While I fully support policies that ensure safety and responsible recreation on our lakes, the current proposals appear to be based more on perception than evidence. To date, there is no credible data demonstrating that wake boats pose a unique safety risk compared to other recreational vessels. Regulatory decisions should be guided by facts, not false narratives.

Evidence from Studies

Several independent studies have examined wake boat operations and their impacts, and none have concluded that wake boats present a disproportionate safety hazard:

- University of Minnesota – St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (2022): Researchers measured wave height, energy, and shoreline impact from wakes produced by both wake boats and traditional recreational boats. The findings showed that while wake boats produce larger waves, the energy dissipates quickly with distance, and safe operation in deeper waters mitigates concerns.
- Lake Rabun Impact Analysis (2021): A comprehensive study in Georgia found that wake boat waves were comparable to those of other large recreational vessels when operated responsibly, and did not result in higher accident or injury rates.
- Wisconsin Lakes Study (2025): Researchers recommended wake boats operate in deeper waters to minimize lakebed disturbance, but importantly, the study did not identify wake boats as a safety threat to other users.

These findings reinforce that wake boats, when operated under existing regulations, are not a safety concern. The focus should remain on responsible operation and education, not unnecessary restrictions.

Concerns with Proposed Changes

Two proposed changes stand out as especially problematic:

1. 500-Foot Distance Rule for Wakeboats

Under the proposal, wakeboats would be required to maintain 500 feet from all other boats, swimmers, kayaks, docks, and shorelines. Currently, wakeboats must remain 500 feet from shore and 200 feet from other users- the same requirement for other operators.

- This change would create significant confusion on the water, as wakeboats would be held to a different standard than other vessels.
- Enforcement would become unnecessarily complicated, leading to inconsistent application of the law.
- Most troubling, this rule could allow individuals to intentionally position themselves in the middle of smaller wake sport zones, effectively disrupting legal and safe wake activity.

2. Wake Sport Zone Size Increase (50 acres → 100 acres)

The proposal to increase the minimum wake sport zone size from 50 acres to 100 acres would eliminate wake sport access on several lakes where it currently functions safely and responsibly.

- Many of these lakes have long histories of safe wake sport use under the existing 50-acre standard.
- Expanding the requirement to 100 acres does not align with actual lake use, conditions, or historical safety records.
- This change would unnecessarily restrict access and penalize responsible boaters without evidence of improved safety outcomes.

Wake sports are a valued recreational activity in Vermont, enjoyed by families and communities who take pride in safe and responsible boating. The existing regulations already provide clear standards that

balance safety with access. Further restrictions, absent evidence of risk, would unfairly limit participation and diminish the vitality of our lakes.

I urge the Department to reconsider these proposals and instead focus on education, enforcement of existing rules, and collaboration with the boating community. Vermont has an opportunity to lead with fact-based, balanced policy that supports both safety and recreation.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. I appreciate your commitment to protecting Vermont's waters while ensuring fair access for all users.

Respectfully,

Grant Smith

We have had a summer home on Willoughby Lake since 1958. It is a pristine and beautiful lake. Although loons are not known to nest there, they do come to fish. Wake boats create tremendous waves which can damage the shoreline and interrupt wildlife. Canoes, kayaks and paddleboards can all be impacted, not to mention swimmers. The question of ballast tanks possibly transporting contaminated water from one lake to the next is also problematic. We successfully banned jet skis and, we hope, we can successfully ban wake boats.

I encourage the state to NOT allow wake boats on Lake Willoughby. When Jet Skis were allowed on the lake years ago, nobody obeyed the rules and they were a total nightmare. Unfortunately, human nature has not changed since then. The lake already has plenty of boating sport choices and we do not need this newer, more intrusive kind of boat here.

WAKESPORTS

Sirs/Ladies:

I write to respectfully request that you ban wake boats from Lake Willoughby.

Great effort and expense have been expended over the last 20 years or so to try to control the spread of milfoil in Willoughby. Wake boats with their large ballast tanks present a significant danger to spreading milfoil.

Wake boats also constitute a significant threat to loons — a protected species.

The huge wakes generated by these unnecessary watercraft cause damage to boats moored to docks or in boathouses.

Most importantly, their outsized wakes are a danger to canoes, kayaks, other small watercraft and swimmers.

Willoughby is a small and beautiful lake. It is in the National Historic Registry. The lake and those who use it responsibly deserve to be protected — not despoiled or harmed.

If these craft must be countenanced in the Green Mountain State, please confine them to Lake Champlain and bodies of water MUCH bigger than Willoughby.

Thank you for your consideration.

- Bill McGuire (a property owner on Willoughby, a taxpayer, and a 79-year summer resident)

While I believe wake sports should be confined to bodies of water that naturally see waves the size of wakes generated by the sport, I support the changes in the rules. At least you are protecting some of our bodies of water from the unnatural use and disruption of wake sports.

I have already stated my opposition to wake boats on all interior lakes due to the degrading affects on water quality/increased phosphorus levels and inevitable spread of AIS. The rules rely on boat owner/operator to ensure bilge tanks are clear of AIS (which is impossible) and to operate within the parameters set by the state wakeboat maps for each lake deemed eligible. Water levels change. What was 20 feet of depth in 2024 was significantly lower in 2025 droughts- Echo level was down dramatically for example. Release of legacy phosphorus is an imminent and obvious threat. Public safety is equally of concern. Again, rules to protect non-wakeboat users are unenforceable, relying on wakeboat operators to behave responsibly. Risk of life and limb to non-wakeboat users of our lakes cannot be underestimated. Rules should favor the average Vermonter or other lake users, not the elites who can afford a boat costing well over a hundred thousand dollars.

Protecting water quality and public safety must be the first consideration of the ANR. Full stop.

Wake Sports, ie "surfing unattached to a boat that creates an artificial wave", should not be considered a normal use of inland bodies of water in Vermont. It has been proven to be unsafe for other normal lake users, destructive to natural habitat, lake shores, and lake bottoms, stirring up legacy phosphorus which harms the water quality of our lakes. Wake sports should be prohibited on all inland lakes of Vermont.

I write in support of the new draft USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE. It includes important guidelines for the safety of both humans and wildlife such as;

-100 contiguous acres, -500 feet away from shore, other boats, rafts, docks and loon nests, -shape normalization and -designates a 'run' as 3000' in length.

To Whom it May Concern at ANR/DEC:

I previously submitted my viewpoint. I am extremely satisfied with the most recent draft UPW rules. Thank you to everyone who put forth the effort to better protect and maintain Vermont's cherished water bodies. VT is taking the steps necessary to ensure future generations also have access to unspoiled environments. I'm thrilled by the updated wakesports rules, which I feel are long overdue. For some time, these boats have damaged/destroyed waterfronts and animal habitats. More often than not, the owners of these boats do not realize the harm they cause.

That being said, I definitely support the new draft rules which highlight the safety of others who use the Vermont waters and encourage the more stringent rules for decontamination.

Thank you for your time and consideration. - Greg Parthum

I write this in support of the proposed revised statewide wakesports rule within the Use of Public Waters Rules which would ban wakesports from the Waterbury Reservoir, and all but 18 other lakes in Vermont.

This revised rule, requiring at least 100 contiguous acres of lake, at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet deep, would protect the majority of the boating and recreating public, that majority that do not

participate in wave producing wakesports.

This new rule , including the extension of length required to 3000 feet, would reduce the negative impacts of erosion, harm to loons and other wildlife, and limit the arrival of invasive species (newly arrived in Waterbury—yellow irises), and shoreline impacts of wakes. People could now safely paddle and camp in the dam arm, as the potential presence of large and powerful wakes created by wake sports activity would be removed.

The Home Rule provision in prior regulations appeared destined to fail, as it is un-enforceable, and the state lacks the facilities to adequately enforce it. Though this rule may be removed, the responsibility for decontamination and removal of invasive species will fall on the boat operator. The continuation of the Invasive Species Greeter program is therefore all the more essential.

Paddlers and operators of fishing and ski boats have reached, over a long period of time and conflict, a generally cooperative co-existence, as those boat operators have strict regulations to reduce the risk to quiet paddlers and their wave impact is not extreme. Some reservoir users that oppose wake sports have taken matters into their own hands, resulting in dangerous confrontations. The lack of actual and reliable enforcement of wake sports regulations has created a “wild west” environment where accountability and responsibility can be shirked by irresponsible wake sports participants. Eliminate wakesport activity on the reservoir, and such conflicts are decreased.

Wakesports will continue to be allowed on 18 lakes in Vermont; that number is far more than the number of lakes dedicated to paddling where motorboat activity is prohibited . There are far more quiet water users and paddlers than there are wakesports participants in Vermont, so this rule addresses the well-stated and documented concerns of the majority of recreational lake users, while still providing multiple options for wakesports. Paddlers and swimmers, and those who prefer quieter recreation on the water may not have the high-priced lobbying or motor sports manufacturer’s backing, but we have a clear vision. That vision allows our precious waterways to be protected and shared safely by wildlife, birds, and recreating people.

To Whom it May Concern at ANR/DEC,

I write in support of the new draft USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE. It includes important guidelines for the safety of both humans and wildlife such as;

-100 contiguous acres, -500 feet away from shore, other boats, rafts, docks and loon nests, -shape normalization and -designates a ‘run’ as 3000’ in length.

If a lake has no resident wake boats on it, NO wake boats should be permitted

If a lake is A-1 eligible, NO wake boats should be permitted

Wake boats need to remain in one lake. If they can’t declare a lake to reside in, they must only be permitted to trailer their boat to a state authorized decontamination station before entering a sanctioned lake. Out of state boaters must be directed to a decontamination station prior to entrance to any wake boat sanctioned lake.

In closing, I wish to remind the DEC that it is your responsibility “to protect Vermont’s natural resources and safeguard human health for the benefit of this and future generations.” Water quality is amongst

those natural resources.

I support the new draft UPW rules which highlight the safety of others who use the Vermont waters and encourage the above additions and more stringent rules for decontamination.

Most sincerely,

Shadow Lake, Glover

We own a lake camp on Maidstone Lake. We are lucky, for now, to be one of the cleanest lakes in the state.

Although wake boats aren't much of an issue there, other lakes in Vermont are in serious trouble.

Removing the Home Lake Rules is a terrible idea.

Wake boat ballasts cannot be easily nor completely emptied or cleaned-out. They will only spread invasive contaminants between bodies of water.

Please do not remove this provision.

I support the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules.

I have watched in recent years as wake sports on Lake Dunmore have increased shoreline erosion, disrupted enjoyment of the lake by other users, and threatened wildlife in the area. I am also concerned about potential contamination by zebra mussels and other invasive species.

Some of the changes to the rules that I support include the following:

- * Increasing the minimum size of the wakesports zone from 50 to 100 acres.
- * Explicitly requiring that a wakesports zone must accommodate a 3,000 ft run. This also should be enforced.
- * Prohibiting wakesports within 500 ft of other users and nesting loons. Lake Dunmore's loons have recovered well in recent decades, and their habitat needs to be better protected.
- * Clarifying that wake boat decontamination is required before entering a lake. This is especially a problem on Lake Dunmore where many people come with their wake boat from out of state for short periods of time. Decontamination areas should be set up at a safe distance from the lakes and required to be used by all boats before they are launched.

While I would like to see stronger rules, these changes are a good start.

Thank you.

I support of the new draft USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE. It includes important guidelines for the safety of both humans and wildlife such as;

-100 contiguous acres, -500 feet away from shore, other boats, rafts, docks and loon nests, -shape normalization and -designates a 'run' as 3000' in length.

I would like to point out that:

-It fails to increase the depth of use which scientific research has shown to support more than 20 feet which is what is included in the draft rules.

-The most important deletion is the absence of mandatory state decontamination of wake boats. Documentation of the inability to fully empty ballast water will allow for the transport of aquatic invasive species. This transport is against the law.

In my opinion:

-if a lake has no resident wake boats on it, NO wake boats should be permitted

-if a lake is A-1 eligible, NO wake boats should be permitted

-wake boats need to remain in one lake. If they can't declare a lake to reside in, they must only be permitted to trailer their boat to a state authorized decontamination station before entering a sanctioned lake. Out of state boaters must be directed to a decontamination station prior to entrance to any wake boat sanctioned lake.

In closing, I wish to remind the DEC that it is your responsibility "to protect Vermont's natural resources and safeguard human health for the benefit of this and future generations." Water quality is amongst those natural resources.

I support the new draft UPW rules which highlight the safety of others who use the Vermont waters and encourage the above additions and more stringent rules for decontamination.

I do not support the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed changes to the Use of Public Waters Rules adopted in April 2024 to regulate wakesports on Vermont's inland lakes. I would rather see no wakeboats on Vermont's inland lakes but since that isn't happening I would at least like to see the regulations changed to allow towns to decide if they want wakesports on their lake. But if they are allowed on all the designated lakes we must have the Home Lake Rule. This at least would help to prohibit invasive species. As a 75 year old kayaker who hopes to be able to kayak until 80 at least I would ask that the state be considerate of the quiet users of our lakes. Why should the enjoyment of a few people prohibit the enjoyment of the majority of users on our lakes - kayakers, anglers, swimmers, canoists, sailors, sail boarders etc.

I support keeping the home lake rule. Wake sports are not a normal use of our lakes and we need to protect the wildlife, environment to the best of our ability. With that in mind, it would be an asset to increase the size of the wakesport zones to 100 acres, with a 3000' run. These dangerous boats need to be kept a minimum of 500' from other users and loon nesting sites, in my opinion. Last, but not least, I support decontamination rules in order to keep Vermont green and healthy.

Thank you,

Laura Winter
Wilmington

I am writing to formally express my opposition to allowing wake boats on Shadow Lake. While I recognize the enjoyment some recreational users derive from wake-enhanced boating, the unique characteristics of Shadow Lake make it unsuitable for this activity due to serious concerns related to safety, aquatic invasive species decontamination, and shoreline erosion.

First and foremost, safety is a significant concern. Shadow Lake is a relatively small and narrow body of water that is heavily used by swimmers, anglers, kayakers, paddleboarders, and families. Wake boats generate large, powerful waves that can travel long distances and rebound unpredictably off

shorelines, creating hazardous conditions for non-motorized users and increasing the risk of accidents, injuries, and property damage. These risks are amplified in confined waters such as Shadow Lake, where maintaining safe distances is difficult or impossible.

Second, wake boats pose heightened risks related to aquatic invasive species (AIS). Due to their ballast tanks and complex internal water systems, wake boats are significantly more difficult to properly drain, clean, and decontaminate compared to traditional boats. Inadequate decontamination increases the likelihood of introducing invasive species, which could permanently damage Shadow Lake's ecosystem, harm native wildlife, and impose long-term financial and environmental costs on the community.

Finally, shoreline erosion is a major and ongoing concern. The size and energy of waves produced by wake boats far exceed those created by conventional recreational boating. These waves accelerate shoreline erosion, damage riparian vegetation, and degrade fish spawning habitat. Over time, this erosion can lead to declining water quality, increased sedimentation, and costly shoreline stabilization efforts borne by property owners and the broader community.

Shadow Lake's ecological health, recreational safety, and long-term sustainability depend on responsible use that aligns with the lake's size and natural limitations. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to prohibit or continue prohibiting the use of wake boats on Shadow Lake in order to protect public safety, preserve water quality, and safeguard the shoreline and surrounding environment.

I support the new draft UPW rules which highlight the safety of others who use the Vermont waters and encourage the above additions and more stringent rules for decontamination.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Keep our small pristine lakes safe and healthy

At a time when environmental rules are being dismissed, we must do our part in our beloved state to protect our waters, our wildlife, our human safety. Wake boats are not "normal". Please support the setbacks to protect people and loons. Support the suggested depth to protect all aquatic life. Recommend people use less destructive recreational opportunities. There are many. Thank you.

I am writing to support the proposed rule changes to the Use of Public Waters. It is important to me to promote the continued benefits that this will do to enhance the peace, accessibility, and quiet that all humans and wildlife need to thrive on the Waterbury Reservoir.

My comment pertains to Vermont and to all wake sports in all American states.

I continue to be deeply concerned for the remaining 18 inland lakes in Vermont that will not benefit from this change and what it means for their future. For the above reasons, spelled out in the 1st paragraph of my statement to you, PLEASE, please consider extending the wake sports ban to them as well.

With heart felt anticipation of positive deliberations for the sake of all humans, wildlife, environment, peace and happiness.

Thank you, Faith Bieler, Waterbury Center, Vermont 05677

Proposed changes need to also incorporate:

Minimum 30-foot water depth requirement (Supported by new studies, including the Lake Waramaug

research)

700-foot setback from shorelines, loon nests, and other lake users (The St. Anthony Falls Laboratory study recommended over 500 ft for wave height and, more importantly, 600 ft for wave power.)

Adding an explicit statement of and commitment to the Precautionary Principle within the UPWR such as this:

“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.”

Amending the UPWR to include a statement that wakesports are NOT a “normal” use and therefore require special consideration and rules that differ from those that apply to “normal,” i.e., traditional, uses.

I am writing yet again in support of strengthening the regulation of wakesports on Vermont lakes.

To continue to protect our natural environment and ensure the safety of recreation on our lakes, I firmly believe that the current regulation of wakesports is insufficient. I believe that there must be a 1,000-foot minimum distance from shore and a 30-foot minimum depth to protect both the lakes themselves and those who use them. In addition, the Home Lake Rule is crucial to the ongoing struggle against the spread of invasive species.

As the preponderance of scientific evidence clearly demonstrates, wakesports are destructive. They represent a significant threat to the wellbeing of our lakes, to those who pursue an array of harmless recreational activities, and to fish and wildlife. They are dangerous to those using the lake for other traditional purposes.

The vast majority of those who live near and use the lakes in Vermont do not want wakesports any closer than 1,000 feet from their shores or in waters less than 30-feet deep. Nor do they want the health of our lakes compromised by the spread of invasive species. I urge you to act in accordance with the scientific evidence and the interests of this majority.

I support the proposed changes to ban wakesports on smaller bodies of water. These changes are good for small lake ecosystems and will make recreating more enjoyable for other users who collectively far outnumber wakesports enthusiasts. I look forward to clearer water, less erosion, a more vibrant lakeshore ecosystem, and a more tranquil paddling experience.

There are well over 1500 children swimming, canoeing, sailing and playing in Lake Fairlee every summer. Many are young and not yet completely proficient in water sports. Keeping them safe and excited about caring for our lakes and waterways is vital. Wake sports create scary and unsafe conditions particularly in such a narrow lake. Please keep children safe by banning wake sports on Lake Fairlee! Thank you so much!

As longtime homeowners at lovely Lake Fairlee in Thetford, we are writing in support of the proposed rules to limit wakesports to larger lakes. Wakesport boats should not be permitted to disrupt the quiet enjoyment of our small lakes with the waves they create, which are much larger and more powerful than waves from traditional motorboats. We have experienced and seen other kayakers being thrown off balance by these powerful waves. We personally had to put in new protections for our small watercraft and dock near the rocky shore when wakeboats started coming in a few years ago. Lake Fairlee is a small and narrow lake. Even the widest part is too small to absorb such large waves, which reverberate for a while after a boat has passed. We ask that you help to restore the calmer waters recreational users have enjoyed for years.

We want to share our concern about aquatic invasive species, as well. It was disappointing to learn that the "Home Lake Rule" was not included among the proposed changes. We hope that hot water decontamination, which is included in the new rules, will be effectively enforced for wake boats traveling between waterbodies.

Thank you for your consideration.
Respectfully submitted,
Reinhart Sonnenburg and Marianna McKim

I am in support of the DEC changes which would make wakeboarding illegal on little Lake Fairlee. As a person who uses Lake Fairlee frequently in the summer, I am aware of the potential risks of wake producing boats causing unsafe conditions such as swamping or scaring canoeists, kayakers, sail boats & wind surfers. I also believe that wake boats can cause damage to the ecosystem of small Lake Fairlee. I believe wake boats should be allowed on larger lakes where there is less chance for accidents, injuries to other lake users.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.
Bridget Brennan
West Fairlee, VT

I have been a summer resident at Lake Fairlee for over twenty-five years. During this time, we waterskied, tubed, kneeboarded, and wakeboarded. At no time did we ever feel the need for a wakeboat and we strongly oppose their use on the lake. Our property has already lost substantial shoreline to ongoing practices and adding more wake will only make matters worse.

I really want wake boats banned from our small narrow Lake Fairlee. 2 years ago, we were totally splashed by a fast wake boat passing us in our pontoon boat. We are elderly people and since then, we are very nervous about going out on the lake.

merit.scotford@gmail.com

Please don't allow Wake boats on Lake Fairlee, They erode the shoreline, disturb the wild life, and make swimming and kayaking dangerous.

Our shoreline on the Western shore of Lake Fairlee has been eroding a lot these past few years due to wakeboat waves hitting our shore line and undermining the rocky shoreline.

Hi,
I live within a 1/2 mile of Lake Fairlee and enjoy my time on the lake. I am disturbed that wake boats could be allowed on the lake. Given the size and shape of Lake Fairlee, the wakes these boats create do not have time to dissipate before hitting the shore and causing damage to the flora and fauna.

I don't think the proposed changes go far enough because they eliminate the Home Lake Rule and do not adopt the greater setbacks from shore and minimum depth standards recommended by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes to better protect all Vermont lakes.

Allowing wake boats on Lake Fairlee is not in the long term interest of a healthy, multi-use lake.

Thank you,
Bill Keegan
Post Mills, VT

These rules are a good start but do not do nearly enough to protect our lakes. As someone in grad school for Conservation Biology, the danger these wake boats pose to our lakes is significant. We need a home lake rule to prevent the spread of invasive species but ideally keep wake boats out of our lakes, period. The issues of sediment disruption on lake beds and disturbing aquatic life is enormous. I fail to

see why the laws should privilege the few (the wake boat owners and users) at the disadvantage of all the human and non-human beings

I'm writing to provide feedback on your proposed amendments to the Use of Public Waters rules related to wakesports on Vermont's inland lakes. Much of the focus for these proposed changes centers around safety-related issues, which was my greatest area of concern when the first rule went into effect in April 2024.

While I was hoping for greater operating distance setbacks across-the-board, your proposal to prohibit wakesports within 500 feet of other recreational users will significantly increase a person's sense of security when out on the lake. Likewise, the increased operating distance from loon nesting sites will further protect their fragile nests from flooding. Aligning these two operating distance requirements with the current 500' from shore requirement to me is an essential addition to the rules, as it signifies that all entities are correspondingly worthy of protection from the harm that may be caused by enhanced wakes.

The popularity of wakesports is projected to grow significantly in Vermont and throughout the nation in the coming years. Clearly ANR has taken this into account in the newly proposed definition of a wakesport zone, which will require a minimum of 100 acres and a 3,000-foot length requirement. This change will allow multiple wakeboarders to safely enjoy their sport concurrently and obliges each wake boat operator, when there are multiple wake boats on a lake, to carefully scope out their route, providing greater safety for all when sharing the wakesport zone becomes necessary. In addition, it will lessen conflicts that are likely to arise with an increase in users competing for space within the designated wakesport zone.

All in all, these proposed changes will benefit the vast majority of lake users and I appreciate being given the opportunity to provide feedback on your proposals.

Linda Alderton
Lake Parker
West Glover, VT

As a property and home owner on Caspian Lake, I am steadfastly against any rule that would allow wakeboats on Caspian for the following reasons:

1. Wakeboat wakes are destructive causing erosion to the shoreline and damage to personal property. Some shoreline properties have had to reinforce the shoreline with large rocks to prevent erosion. Large wakes can cause small objects tied to docks to bang against the dock.
2. Wakeboat operators may not always adhere to the requirement regarding loon safety and no public official will be available to in-force the loon safety rule. Young loons are not always in the immediate vicinity of their nests and could be harmed. Loons are making a comeback and Caspian is an important part of that comeback.
3. Small watercraft including canoes, kyacks, small sailboats, wind surfers, etc. are affected by wakes making them unstable with the potential to capsize. I personally use a very unstable kyack and with an inexperienced operator the kyack could easily capsize.
4. There are a number of long distance swimmers who are often accompanied by a craft or a use a floater, but there are occasional swimmers who are not easily spotted. I personally know of close encounters between swimmers and motorboats and expect this possibility with wakeboats.
5. There is a noise factor to be considered as many people enjoy the quiet of the lake and allowing one more mechanized watercraft adds to the potential for more noise.
6. It seems that allowing wakeboats on Caspian Lake serves a small number of people while it is

detrimental in many ways to the shoreline and to a number of people.

In summary, there are many negative aspects to allowing wakeboats on Caspian Lake and few positive reasons.

I have had a house on Lake Parker for over 24 years and allowing wake sports on the lake would be a terrible change for so many Vermont children and families that use the lake for recreation. It would also affect fishermen. This is a small lake where 45 feet in front of my property it is still only 14" deep. Wake boats would wreak havoc on the wildlife and fragile lake ecosystem. I strongly support the Vermont ANR's 2025 proposed revisions to the "Use of Public Waters Rules" which would effectively eliminate wake sports on Lake Parker.

My family has a house on Lake Parker in Glover, VT and we've been spending summers there for a quarter century. Like all our neighbors, we swim, fish, kayak, paddleboard, take our kids tubing and watch the recently-revived loon population from our canoe. Lake Parker is an incredibly small and shallow lake, which makes it perfect for these small crafts. Wake sports would be catastrophic to the natural habitat and all the ways that residents use the lake. I grew up on this lake and now take my own children there to appreciate the natural beauty. We are proud to invest our resources and time in this place year after year. Wake sports would undermine all of the attributes that make this lake distinctive and appealing to the people who seek it out. To allow these destructive boats on such a lake would ultimately be economically, culturally and environmentally devastating.

PLEASE reinstate the home lake rule for wake boats. There are so few lakes in Vermont that remain uncontaminated by aquatic invasive species, and wake boats traveling between lakes pose a very direct threat to the last remaining pristine lakes. I cannot fathom why the state would prioritize this one very high-impact form of recreation (that is generally only accessible to people with the wealth to afford the very expensive boats) over the health of our waterways.

For the sake of a couple of contaminated boats coming into our lake which is currently free of invasive species, it would ruin it for all who use and live on the lake. It is common knowledge that boats transfer invasives in the ballast from contaminated waterways and the current home lake rule was the smartest way to prevent this from happening. I think the majority of lake people would agree to keep our lakes pristine in this day and age of invasive species ruining Vermont's charm.

January 13, 2026

To Whom it May Concern at ANR/DEC,

I write in support of the new draft USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE. It includes important guidelines for the safety of both humans and wildlife such as;

-100 contiguous acres, -500 feet away from shore, other boats, rafts, docks and loon nests, -shape normalization and -designates a 'run' as 3000' in length.

-It fails to increase the depth of use which scientific research has shown to support more than 20 feet which is what is included in the draft rules.

-The most important deletion is the absence of mandatory state decontamination of wake boats.

Documentation of the inability to fully empty ballast water will allow for the transport of aquatic invasive species. This transport is against the law.

-if a lake has no resident wake boats on it, NO wake boats should be permitted

-if a lake is A-1 eligible, NO wake boats should be permitted

-wake boats need to remain in one lake. If they can't declare a lake to reside in, they must only be permitted to trailer their boat to a state authorized decontamination station before entering a sanctioned lake. Out of state boaters must be directed to a decontamination station prior to entrance to any wake boat sanctioned lake.

In closing, I wish to remind the DEC that it is your responsibility "to protect Vermont's natural resources and safeguard human health for the benefit of this and future generations." Water quality is amongst those natural resources.

I support the new draft UPW rules which highlight the safety of others who use the Vermont waters and encourage the above additions and more stringent rules for decontamination.

Most sincerely,
Ellen Wolff
Shadow Lake, Glover

. Please leave THE HOME LAKE OPTION AVAILABLE TO THE WAKE BOATERS . AS AN owner OF A PROPERTY O lake Seymour, we are very concerned about the possibility of the transfer of invasive species through the wake boat hulls. This should be a common sense approach to preserving pristine LaKE sEYMOUR!

We should be able to keep the home lake rules and greeters should definitely turn away questionable boats to keep our lake pristine!!!

We're new to the lake and very committed to its protection. Is there any new data to suggest that the previously approved rules for wakeboarding on the lake should be changed? Our assumption is that the current rules took into account differences (ie wave height, boat speed, impact in shoreline, etc) between motor boats and wakeboarding boats. Is there new information available that we should dramatically alter wakeboarding access? If not, new data should be sought before making any decisions that could impact on people's investments and enjoyment. These decisions should be evidence based and the burden for change should be on those challenging the status quo. If there is compelling data, it should be made available so the public can evaluate its merit and weigh its impact. Protecting the lake is the top priority. Unless the evidence to support the new rule is presented, we would not support the tighter restrictions.

I find it hard to believe that the Vermont Department of ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION would abandon their stated purpose, which is actually their name, to conserve the environment, by writing such lax - and probably very harmful - wake boat guidelines for our pristine, irreplaceable lakes. Besides rejecting a home lake rule, you've made the incomprehensible decision to allow wake boats into the water that greeter/inspectors have judged unacceptable. Once contaminated, these lakes will be a lot less appealing to all who love and enjoy them, including the wake boaters. There are so many ways to enjoy our waters - must these boats be one of them?

Jan. 13, 2026

To Whom it May Concern at ANR/DEC;

I'm writing to support the new draft USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE. It includes important guidelines for the safety of both humans and wildlife on Shadow Lake in Glover where I own property. I am especially worried about the inability to fully empty ballast water which will transport invasive aquatic species.

Shadow Lake Assn. has spent a huge amount of effort to control milfoil invasion in our lake. It is gone due to their efforts, but wake boats moving from one lake to another could cause it to return. I expect you to protect Vermont's natural resources, including water quality, for us and future generations. I support the new UPW rules.

Thank-you. Claudia McCormack

I wholeheartedly support the adoption of the home lake rule provision

Wake sports should absolutely be banned from Lake Fairlee. My wife and I kayak on the Lake and when you encounter a wake boat it is a disaster.

My wife (a native Vermonter) and I are Vermont residents and live year-round in the home we own on the shore of Lake Fairlee. I am writing in support of the proposed rules.

Naturally, we regularly enjoy the peaceful recreational opportunities offered by the lake. We would like to continue to enjoy these peaceful pursuits without the disturbances and safety concerns caused by wakesports.

The interests of the majority of residents is reflected in the ranks of those who have previously spoken at your hearings and submitted comments. In addition, the selectboards of all three towns surrounding Lake Fairlee - Thetford, Fairlee, and West Fairlee - as well as all five summer camps on Lake Fairlee, and the Lake Fairlee Association support the proposed rules.

I have recently learned that most of the opposition has come from out-of-state friends and family of just two wake-boat-owning families. This is not surprising and reflects the fact that the current rules favor only a minuscule minority - the two families who are not even Vermont residents.

I urge you to enact the proposed rules to protect the interests and safety of the large majority of people who have a genuine, deep, long-standing connection to the state of Vermont.

We have had a year round camp on Lake Parker for 3 years. One of the reasons we chose Lake Parker for our home was its size and quiet atmosphere. We enjoy the community of pontoon boats, small ski and fishing boats and of course the "people powered" kayaks, canoes and paddle boards.

We have been monitoring the ANR's process in terms of revising the Wake Sports rule for the State of Vermont. After consideration, we gladly join, the Town of Glover Selectboard and the Lake Parker Association in support of the revisions that include:

- Increasing the contiguous Wake Sports Zone to 100 acres
- Adding the provision for a minimum run of 3000 feet within a Wake Sports Zone
- Increasing the distance to 500 feet from individuals, canoers, kayakers, docks and other vessels anchored or moored.
- Increasing the distance for nesting loons to 500 feet

We believe that the proposed revisions will help maintain the beauty and health of lakes (including Lake Parker) that have never had resident wake boats.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anne Parrish
Monette Place
West Glover VT

Dear ANR,

I have been involved in this discussion since its inception and worked diligently during the initial rule changes to advocate for a fair resolution for both sides. I believe the previous updates achieved an appropriate balance for Lake Iroquois. As a business owner and a father, it is exhausting to repeatedly defend my family's use of the lake against new rulemaking.

Our family has maintained a camp on Lake Iroquois since the 1950s, and I am fortunate to live here full-time. We have always enjoyed a variety of water sports, including swimming, skiing, tubing, and fishing. My children are now learning to wakeboard, and the prospect of this being banned is deeply concerning, especially given that the lake's depth and size allow for these activities to be conducted safely.

As a responsible boater, I strictly adhere to shoreline distances, proper depths, and buffer zones, often waiting for the lake to clear of other users before heading out. I believe that education, rather than increased regulation, is the appropriate solution.

Lake Iroquois does not experience heavy wakeboat traffic; We see a variety of motor boats each season (fishing boats, ski boats, open bow boats), but you can count on one hand how many wakeboats are stationed here, and we coexist respectfully with all lake users. While I agree that specific rules are necessary for certain bodies of water, applying a broad mandate across diverse lakes is a mistake.

I do not have the capacity to debate this in public meetings again, but I hope my family's perspective is considered. I respectfully decline to support this rule change as it pertains to Lake Iroquois.

As a long time resident of Thetford and recreational participant of Lake Fairlee. I am in support of banning wakesports on Lake Fairlee. The lake is not nearly large enough to accommodate those huge boats and would cause tremendous environmental degradation of the Lakes ecosystem, as well as causing great disruption to fisherman, kayakers and regular boaters. Lakes the size of Winnepesaukee are more capable of having wake boats. Thank you.

I support many of the changes associated with this proposed rule change, such as increasing the size of the lake area, requiring a 3000 ft run, and offering better protections for loon nesting and other users. However, I encourage stronger protections in some areas. In particular, I strongly oppose removing the Home Lake Rule, which is the strongest method to minimize the spread of aquatic invasive species from one lake to another. Relying on users to decontaminate seems unlikely to occur regularly.

Additionally, I suggest:

- 1) adding a minimum 30-foot water depth requirement, as supported by new studies
- 2) adding a 700-foot setback from shorelines, loon nests, and other lake users (studies have shown wave power decreases over 600 ft; a 700 ft setback would cover this plus a buffer as the precautionary principle states)
- 3) adding an explicit statement of and commitment to the Precautionary Principle within the UPWR such as this:
"When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."
- 4) amending the UPWR to include a statement that wakesports are not a "normal" use and therefore require special consideration and rules that differ from those that apply to "normal," i.e., traditional, uses.

Thank you.

I am very concerned for the safety of small boaters (using kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, rowing shells) in the presence of wake generation. Drivers of wake boats may not detect the presence of small boats in front of them, since the bow is higher than the stern, where drivers are situated. Further, the height of these wakes is such that small boats such as the ones listed above would be prone to capsizing - disastrous if this occurs far from shore (as might well happen on Willoughby Lake). Additionally, the waves may propagate far from the generating boat, so small boaters may not have adequate warning of a dangerous wake.

The distances proposed look good on paper, for the most part; but most boaters have no sense of distances.

And lastly, enforcement of the proposed rules would be largely impractical.

I favor banning wakesports on Vermont lakes.

From what I have read it seems that there has been progress and compromise on the issue of wakeboats on Vermont lakes. Some of the issues I commented on last year seem to have been resolved. While the current proposed rule still has some shortcomings (elimination of the home lake rule for instance) and I still believe that that safety doesn't lend itself to compromise, I can live with the proposed rule for now.

My wife and I have spent all or part of our summers on Lake Fairlee for over 50 years. We've owned property there since the 1990s. We use the lake for swimming, sailing, paddleboarding, kayaking and pontoon cruising. Even waterski boats now make bigger waves than in the past but we've learned to cope and adapt. Wakeboats are another issue and, after being knocked off my paddle board once and had waves wash across the front of my kayak last summer, we no longer go out on the lake when we see a wake boat in use. Fortunately there are very few moored on Lake Fairlee so we're able to get out muck of the time. We are both in our 80s now, and rely on watersports to stay fit in the summer.

In over five decades as a practicing physician and healthcare policy-maker I've seen many well intended compromises lead to unfortunate irreversible outcomes. Safety should never be compromised. Wakeboats are unsafe on such a small lake. I have seen them in use when on Lake Champlain and, like jet skis, they have little impact. They belong on such large lakes that can absorb the disruption, not this one.

Andrew Pomerantz, MD
Chelsea, Vermont

COMMENTS REGARDING VERMONT DRAFT OF UPDATED RULES REGARDING WAKE BOATS AND WAKE SURFING

My name is Chuck Becker. I live in Minnesota and I'm a founding member of a grassroots organization called SafeWakes for Minnesota Lakes. While I strongly support the majority of the new DRAFT Rules currently being considered by the Vermont DEC, I'm imploring the DEC to reconsider the distance from shore parameter and to consider changing the Rules to at least a 600' minimum distance from shore while boats are engaged in enhanced wake sports, including wake surfing.

The current DEC draft of a minimum 500' setback correlates to the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (SAFL) Phase I Study results regarding Maximum Wave Height. However, the results of this study also concluded that based on Total Wave Energy, the operational distance required should be greater than 575'. And, based on Maximum Wave Power, the required distance should be greater than 600'. Note that in the 2015 Study paid for by the Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA), their researcher, Clifford Goudey, stated "energy is a more rigorous measure of the potential of a wave to affect shorelines".

While I fully support the results of the SAFL Study, the two 2019 wake boats tested had 450 horsepower engines and gross weights of 10,025 lbs. and 13,408 lbs. respectively when fully loaded, per manufacturer specs. As we all know, manufacturers are continually increasing the length, weight, ballast capacity, technology and horsepower of wake boats to create ever bigger, more powerful wakes. In a Robb Report dated December 17, 2022, four wake boats boasting 600+ horsepower are featured, including one boat at 650 horsepower and a gross weight of 17,198 lbs., nearly 2 tons heavier than the largest wake boat tested in the St. Anthony Falls Study.

In a 2016 article by Centurion Boats, the author stated: "There is No Replacement for Displacement." The author went on to say: "What do I mean by this? Well, it's simple; physics really does matter. There are natural laws that apply to wave/wake size and shape. The wave or wake of your boat (what you surf on) is created by your boat displacing water. So, in basic terms, with all things being equal (the hull shape, size, etc. of the vessel), the boat and ballast combination that weighs the most would displace the most amount of water and thus create the biggest wave."

Common sense and physics tell us that if wake boats like those in the Robb Report are tested, the wave height, energy and power results will be significantly greater than the boats tested in the SAFL Study. Again, I'm imploring the DEC to substantializing increase the distance from shore requirement as currently drafted in order to protect Vermont's lakes and the safety of those using your lakes, both now and in the future.

Thank you for considering my comments and thank you for leading the way in implementing effective state-wide rules based on valid science and common sense. And, thank you for considering safety in your newly drafted rules. We have had serious, documented wake boat related injuries in Minnesota, including at least one broken back, as well as near-misses that could easily have resulted in fatalities.

Chuck Becker
SafeWakes for Minnesota Lakes
SafeWakes.org
612-280-4736

Waterbury Reservoir, the closest large lake to which I live, should be exempt from wakeboat use, i.e., prohibited from entering the water. The shorelines are very steep all around the lake and reflect waves making water that is choppy and dangerous for other recreational users such as paddleboarders, canoeists, kayakers, swimmer, sailboats and fishermen in motorboats. This often drives those users away. That is simply not right.

Wakeboats also are prone to spread invasive aquatic species, no matter the deliberate care taken to prevent that. It takes only a single boat and some carelessness to ruin a lake. Your current proposal to prevent such contamination is inadequate

Wildlife abounds on and around this lake: uncommon birds such as eagles, herons, loons, furbearers such as otters, mink and muskrat and reptiles and amphibians such as snapping turtles and various forms of salamanders and many species of fish need our protection. Wakeboats wakes would likely destroy any loon nests whether human -constructed nests or natural.

I support, in general, other proposed changes except that the 500 ft rule is inadequate to minimize the disturbance to shorelines, wildlife and other recreational users. It should be doubled at a minimum.

The decisions you make here will have a national ripple effect and impact.

I am in favor of keeping the home lake rule provision in the re-write of the Use of Public Water Rules (UPW). It is the most effective way to prevent wake boats from spreading AIS to our lakes.

DO NOT GET RID OF THE HOME LAKE RULE!

I am unalterably opposed to wake boats on Lake Willoughby. They are unsafe to swimmers, kayakers, canoeists. They are harmful to the loons which the State and us landowners seek to protect. They cause damage to boats moored to docks. They are unnecessary, unneeded and harmful. Please, please, please step up and ban them!

oppose as it pertains to Lake Iroquois. Please see response from Ernie Rossi - him and his family own several properties on the lake and have been good advocates for finding fair resolution for both sides.

I support the proposed change to 100 contiguous acres. Our beautiful Lake Parker is not an appropriate place for wake sports. As a kayaker and small boat sailor I know that those activities could not coexist with the presence of a wake boat as the huge wave would topple our crafts and be very dangerous. The shoreline which we and the state work so hard to keep pristine would be devastated. The water in the ballast of a wake boat would significantly increase the chance of contamination with Eurasian Milfoil and other invasive species, which so far we have been successful in preventing. Thank you

I am writing to you today to restate my extreme concerns about wake boats on our smaller lakes in Vermont. I have been on Lake Parker for over 20 years. It is referred to by locals as a 'pond' because it is small. It is also not particularly deep compared to other lakes.

I have 3 concerns when it comes to wake boats.

The first is safety. It is terrifying to be out on that lake and have large boats coming near you. And the wake that is caused even by smaller speed boats is disturbing when you are in a kayak or canoe.

The second is contamination of our lake waters due to emptying the ballasts that are needed for additional weight. We have worked very hard to keep our lake free from Eurasian milfoil and species that would pose a risk to our lake. We are a small community and would hardly have the resources to counter this threat.

Lastly, is concern over damage to property and shoreline due to the wake. It is costly to maintain natural waterfront, docks and our own watercraft. To have these swamped with large wakes will cause property damage that will never be repaired by those causing it, which seems very unfair.

I ask you to be considerate of those who live here; those who work hard to maintain our properties and care for the lake. I ask you not to let people destroy the fragile peace that we work to maintain, all for a day of fun and at the expense of those who call this home.

I support the proposed revisions that include increasing the minimum wake sports zone to 100 contiguous acres (from 50 contiguous acres).

Thank you for your consideration.

As a frequent visitor to Wilmington, Vermont, I've enjoyed my time on Lake Raponda with friends. I am a strong supporter of the DEC proposed addition to rules related to wakesport activities on Vermont lakes. I also support the proposed changes advocated by the Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes (RWVL) that would enhance the safety for those using Vermont lakes and for the lakes themselves.

I am writing as a local Vermonter who recreates on a number of Vermont lakes, summer and winter and am involved in stewardship of our local Vermont lakes and streams. While I am in support of the proposed updates to wake sport rules, I feel that the proposed rules do not go far enough and need to be strengthened by incorporating the latest science, which clearly recommends more depth and horizontal buffer than has been proposed. Using the Precautionary Principle would best protect Vermont Lakes' ecosystems in future as well as recreationists using and stewarding our lakes.

Specifically, please :

1) apply the Precautionary Principle in the rules. Amend the UPWR to include a statement such as “When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.” Wake sports are not a “normal use” -they are much more turbulent-and do require special considerations and rules, different from those that apply to normal traditional uses.

From the upsetting experiences of a number of friends who recreate daily on our local lake (Lake Fairlee),and have been negatively affected by the outsized wave action and lack of visibility when wake sport drivers are in sport mode, it's clear that wake sport activity can increase the real threat of harm to humans and the environment, so that precautionary measures are crucial to prevent harm .

2) Require a minimum 30-foot water depth requirement, rather than 20' (new studies illustrate exactly why this depth is important to lake ecosystems-e.g read Lake Waramaug Wave Impact Study, November 15, 2024) .

3) rather than 500', require at least a 600' setback (and better, 700-foot setback, as Precautionary) from shorelines, loon nests, and other lake users. creating space for the turbulence of wake boats in wake sport mode. See this Minnesota study <https://conservancy.umn.edu/items/bd2d2968-21c4-4726-8a61-53e7daafcb56>

4) Also, keep the Home Lake Rule. It is the most effective way to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species from one lake to another.

Wakesports are bad for the environment, causing erosion of the shoreline and harm to wildlife. My family has owned property on Lake Fairlee for over 100 years. I care about the lake!

I regularly swim at Treasure Island on Lake Fairlee and am dismayed at the damage done by wakeboats to shorelines and their large waves which are disruptive to swimmers and boaters. Please do not eliminate the Home Lake Rule and do adopt the greater setbacks from shore and minimum depth standards recommended by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes.

Good! Wakeboats are obnoxious.

I whole heartedly agree with ANR's proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules (UPW) specifically the proposed updates to the wakesports:

1) that wakesports zones are at least 3,000 feet in length

2) that the wakesports zone contain 100 contiguous acres of lake that is at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet of depth

3) there is an allowance for "shape normalization" of the wakesports zone to remove odd-shaped sections.

I would like to suggest that additional changes the the current wakesports rules to be:

1) that wakesports zones are at least 3,000 feet in length

2) that the wakesports zone contain 100 contiguous acres of lake that is at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet of depth

3) there is an allowance for "shape normalization" of the wakesports zone to remove odd-shaped sections.

I agree with ARN's placing limits on wakeboarding.

I support the changes to the rules for wakesports. I frequently kayak in the Waterbury Reservoir and have experienced these boats going extremely fast and making such a wake that even by the shoreline

it is dangerous to be out on the water at the same time as them. By ensuring that there are additional rules regarding space and the size of eligible lakes, we will be better ensuring safety for all lake users.

I oppose wakesports on the Waterbury Reservoir.

I agree agree to the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules, which would prohibit wakesports on the Waterbury Reservoir.

I agree to your changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules, which would prohibit wakesports on the Waterbury Reservoir.

I believe the science that shows wake surfing is harmful to the all aspects of our small lakes as well as the shores and the people who recreate on and around them. I would like to see wake surf boats banned aside from the largest lashes wheee they can be far out from shores and people. Thanks

I support the rules you are promulgating for wake boats on the Waterbury Reservoir.

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I agree with the changes made to protect the small lakes in Vermont. Wakesports should only be allowed in large lakes like Lake Champlain.

I routinely canoe on the Waterbury Reservoir. I strongly support the new more restrictive regulations on Wakeboarding. I have seen the damage that the wakes cause to the shoreline in terms of erosion and the drastic effect the wakes have on any attempted nesting of Loons.

I support these changes.

Limiting large wake sports is the right way to protect shoreline and share water access with other less destructive sports. It appears you have carefully determined areas that can withstand large wakes and limit sport to those places. I have seen the damage that can be done by large wakes, and while destruction of shore by erosion, damage to habitat, making kayaking and fishing unpleasant, to abuse of floating docks and persons trying to stay on them to read or enjoy the breeze and view. This is especially true for persons with disabilities of many types.

Please restrict wakesports on smaller lakes in Vermont like the Waterbury Reservoir

I support the updated Wakesports zone wording.

As a long distance motorcyclist I've seen incredible damage done to once pristine lakes out west. Lake Five, near the west entrance of Glacier National Park, is a prime example. Once crystal clear with evergreen trees lining the shore, wake boats have eroded the shoreline toppling majestic trees into the lake, clouding the water with silt, causing a multi-generational campground to fail, and driving visitors to avoid the surrounding area.

Please severely restrict them here in Vermont!

Peter Burke

Craftsbury Common

I support the new rules prohibiting wakeboarding at the Waterbury Reservoir.

I support the proposal to limit huge wakes on the Waterbury Reservoir. They cause excess erosion and endanger paddlers.

I do not support allowing wakesports in Vermont's small, inland lakes. I feel they should be limited to the larger lakes like lake Champlain or memohremegog. Not only do wake boats disrupt wildlife habitat but they are incredibly disruptive also to the people on shore, people in smaller crafts such as kayaks, canoes and paddle boards or fishing boats. I hope you will put a stop to this now. Thank you.

I do NOT support the use of wakesports at the Waterbury Reservoir. I do support changes that limit their use.

The wakes these boats create cause more damage to shorelines than the fun they provide is worth.

I agree with reducing the number of Vermont's inland lakes allowing wakesports from 30 to 18 in order to allow the smaller water areas, like Waterbury Reservoir, to host wildlife conducive to these quieter areas.

This is a long over due change and I support it.

I support this, it would help protect vulnerable wildlife

I support your proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules (UPW). I understand the proposed updates to the wakesports zone definition are:

1) that wakesports zones are at least 3,000 feet in length

2) that the wakesports zone contain 100 contiguous acres of lake that is at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet of depth

3) there is an allowance for "shape normalization" of the wakesports zone to remove odd-shaped sections.

These new rules would prohibit wakesports on the Waterbury Reservoir.

I completely support these changes!

I support the limitations for wakeboard on smaller bodies of water in order to protect shorelines, paddlesports, and the aquatic ecosystem.

I believe that wake surfing effects everyone else on the water in a negative way and should be limited or banned

I am strongly in support of a ban on wakesport activities in Waterbury Reservoir. These activities endanger wildlife, swimmers and paddlers, and interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of the reservoir.

I am in favor of changing the regulation so wake boarding is not allowed at the Waterbury Reservoir.

I support the new rules regarding wakesports on our smaller VT lakes. I live near and recreate at or on the Waterbury Reservoir several times weekly and wakeboats are very disturbing to the lake and shorelines, affecting wildlife, swimmers, and other boaters. They should not be permitted in small lakes.

I agree with prohibiting wakesports on Waterbury reservoir to protect the shoreline.

I agree with prohibiting wakeboarding on the Waterbury Reservoir! I wish it could be treated like the green river reservoir where only trolling motors are allowed!

I agree to the changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules prohibiting wake sports on Vermont lakes.

In order to keep Vermont's waterways safe and enjoyable to ALL residents, we need to make adjustments to recreation wake sports. These changes are a good first start, but will probably need to be tweaked in the future.

I support these changes of eliminating wake sports on the Waterbury Reservoir

I support the proposed rules regarding wakesports. Places like the Waterbury Reservoir are heavily and primarily used by many different type of users that will be negatively affected by the aggressive surf created by wakesports. It is not reasonable to allow a small group of people who engage in wakesports to have such an outsized negative impact on the majority of users who swim, kayak, canoe, paddleboard or boat in smaller, appropriate boats suitable to our smaller lakes. There are other, larger, more suitable lakes for wakesports enthusiasts to frequent,

There is so much pollution and other ecological damage created by motor boats to smaller bodies of water including our beloved Waterbury Reservoir. These restrictions on wake board is the bare minimum. All motorboats should be banned from the Waterbury Reservoir and others like it. This would not only help restore ecological balance, protecting loons and other wildlife, but also be so much safer and more enjoyable for those of us trying to swim, paddle, etc.

Wakeboats are not made for our small lakes in Vermont. When a wakeboat is boating in an area, it creates HUGE waves which make recreating much less pleasant for other boats nearby. It sends huge, ocean-sized waves crashing into shore and has been undercutting our shoreline at our house on Lake Bomoseen for years. Wakeboats carry contaminated water in their ballasts. People from out of state can bring their contaminated boat onto a Vermont water without even paying a fee - and potentially spread invasive plants. Other states charge out of state boaters - Vermont should do the same.

Wakeboaters are paying \$100,000+ for their boats, they can afford to pay a fee - it may help VT to take

care of the invasive plant problem down the road - or help to clean up the lake once phosphorus from the lake bottom has been stirred up by the wakeboat. Plus, wakeboats should not be allowed to blast music while wake boating - it is really annoying and too loud. Why have we in Vermont made wakeboating an activity that precludes other activities on the water? It is near impossible to do any tubing or water skiing or wakeboarding for that matter, when a wakeboat is operating in the vicinity - the ocean-sized waves ruin the fun. Also, many of these boaters do not know the boating rules and will cut off sail boats (I've had this happen on my Dad's sailboat). They need to learn the rules - maybe they need a VT license. They need to pay a LARGE fee. Not to mention the rude out of staters who own these wicked expensive boats - they don't care about water quality or invasive plants or climate change! Let's rev the engine, let's burn that gas! Let's erode the shoreline, let's surf really slowly like idiots while blasting terrible music! Let's face it, sweet child of mine sucks!

Wake boat sports should not be allowed on Waterbury reservoir. The area is just too small. My wife and I shouldn't have to hang on for our lives to kayak on the reservoir.

As a frequent user of Waterbury Reservoir, both on and off the water, I wholehearted support these changes. While camping at Little River, I repeatedly have seen large wakes hit the shoreline. As someone on the water, I have experienced these wakes. They do not seem compatible with the size and shape of Waterbury Reservoir.

I support this proposal. These exaggerated waves on a smaller body of water will not just damage the shore line but will greatly affect other calmer sports like paddle boarding and kayaking.

Wakesports do not belong on this lake.

Wakesports cause erosion and dangers to aquatic species. Please regulate them for the appropriate spaces.

Wakesports not only causes damage to shorelines, but also causes problems for the many other users of our lakes and ponds. Anyone concerned with climate change would also oppose wakesports because it is an energy glutton. Vermont can do better for all users of our waters and for our environment.

I support the proposed changes to Vermont's use of public water rules as it relates to wake sports guidelines. The intensity of wakes generated by wakeboarding creates a safety hazard for other recreational users of the water, including swimmers, paddleboarders and kayakers who may need to cross the wakeboarding zone. Keeping these zones to larger bodies of water just makes sense and it keeps the water accessible to a wider range of users.

Clarity and sensibility need to apply to the rules governing our small lakes. The abundance and ease of accessibility of them invaluable for many reasons. However users do need to understand the impacts of their actions on the world around them. A clear set of rules should include what qualifies as a 'wakesport' and where they are allowed with each launch, public and privately operated having clear signage. I support the changes being proposed and want to be able to enjoy calm safe waters for small craft. However recognize that everyone has a right to enjoy the outdoors in a way they see fit, so I want to make sure that there is clarity around that usage.

As a frequent user of Vermont's lakes I strongly support the proposed changes reducing the number of Vermont lakes allowing wakesports from 10 to 18. On all but the largest lakes this activity is both environmentally destructive and highly disruptive (in some cases dangerous) for most other water activities.

I support the following regulations:

- Increasing the minimum wakesports safety zone (WSZ) from 50 to 100 acres
- Requiring a minimum wakesports run of 3,000 feet
- Expanding the safety buffer from other users and structures from 200 to 500 feet
- Eliminating the Home Lake Rule, which reduces spread of invasive species & replacing it with hot-water ballast tank decontamination for wake boats traveling between lakes

I am a resident of Glover. I strongly support the proposed changes to the use of Vermont's public waters that will restrict wake boat use in Shadow Lake and Parker Lake, both in Glover. Thank you for proposing the addition of these two lakes, and others, to the list of Vermont's lakes that will not allow wake boats.

I hope you will further strengthen your protection of our waters and the wildlife and people who enjoy those waters by declaring that all lakes that are large enough to support wake boats must ensure total decontamination of any incoming and outgoing boats, so that these boats do not inadvertently spread any invasive species between lakes.

Thank you for your work in keeping our lakes safe and clean for people and wildlife to enjoy!

ANR has proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules (UPW). The proposed updates to the wakesports zone definition are:

- 1) that wakesports zones are at least 3,000 feet in length
- 2) that the wakesports zone contain 100 contiguous acres of lake that is at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet of depth
- 3) there is an allowance for "shape normalization" of the wakesports zone to remove odd-shaped sections.

These new rules would prohibit wakesports on the Waterbury Reservoir. I agree with this.

Increasing the minimum wakesports safety zone (WSZ) from 50 to 100 acres, requiring a minimum wakesports run of 3,000 feet, and expanding the safety buffer from other users and structures from 200 to 500 feet will reduce shore erosion on Vermont's smaller lakes and ponds that currently allow wakesports.

As a resident of West Fairlee, VT I support the DEC to limit the use of wake boats. I furthermore feel they don't go far enough and that they should not be allowed on VT lakes. Their use is a great impact on the surrounding environment and on other people's recreation. We all need to share our precious lake resources in consideration of others and the environment.

Wake boat Regulation on Vermont Lakes: A Call for (Real) Action

Concerns Regarding Wake boat Regulation

I am writing to express my ongoing concern about the regulation of wake boats on Vermont's lakes. The state's current proposal to allow wake boats on Willoughby and seventeen other lakes, many of which are located in the Northeast Kingdom—does not address the significant issues of environmental degradation, personal safety and the erosion of peaceful enjoyment of our lakes for residents and visitors alike.

Community Requests and Environmental Impact

Members of the local community, environmental scientists, and recreational lake users have consistently called for reasonable regulations to protect our waters and the communities that rely on them. Instead of addressing these concerns, the DEC continues to shape a plan that finds a way to allow wake boats. Without meaningful state intervention, the problems associated with wake boats continue, threatening water quality, increasing erosion, and reducing the natural beauty that draws people to Vermont. It is essential our state government keeps our lakes healthy and accessible for future generations by banning wake boat use.

Ongoing Regulation

Most disappointing (and cowardly) is that the DEC has no intent to manage or enforce ongoing wake boat regulations. This ownership of this responsibility is foisted on the towns where these lakes exist. Many of these towns do not have the infrastructure, finances, or wherewithal to take this new responsibility. How can the DEC feel good about this? Who, in their right mind, thinks this is the proper thing to do to the denizens of these communities, many of whom are against wake boats? Why is the ongoing enforcement of such a controversial issue not a top concern?

Appeal for Responsible Regulation

I urge you to reconsider the decision not to ban wake boats and to place the long-term health of Vermont's lakes above the interests of a small group of boaters. These lakes are a shared resource, and it is our collective responsibility to protect them for the future.

I strongly support the new proposed rule. It is essential that the wake sports zone be increased from 50 to 100 acres and that there be a minimum run of 3000'. This is necessary for the safety of normal and traditional users. It is necessary so that one wakeboat can not usurp an area of a lake from these users. This is what was happening on Joe's Pond, where my family has had a camp for 66 years. The 50 acre wakesport zone was in the only broad and deep part of the lake. This part of the lake has always been the most popular place to recreate for traditional and normal users. Folks who like to fish want to do so in the deep part of the lake. Sailors head to this area because it is the only spot on the lake where they can make long tacks. It is the favorite area for kids to jump off a boat and swim as the children delight in hearing the depth is 60, 70, 80 and 90' deep. Kayakers and canoers head to this area for it's beauty. And tubers and skiers want to be in this zone to make wide turns. But when one wakeboat is in this zone, it is off limits to all others, who have to avoid it in order to be safe from the large wakes produced by these boats. When a wakeboat is out there, others stay away. If traditional normal users are in this zone and a wakeboat enters, the former feel like they have no choice but to depart. The new rule will prohibit wakesports on Joe's Pond. The overwhelming reaction to this from Joe's Ponders and the townsfolk in Danville and Cabot is relief and gratitude.

While I am most thankful to the DEC for the new proposed rule, I do think it should have gone even further. I support the requests of RWVL to strengthen the rule. We can not go too far to protect the health and vitality of Vermont lakes. We can not go too far to protect the safety and enjoyment of traditional normal users.

Thank you for the new rule and please please adopt it. We very much need it in place by this summer.

I support the new wakesport rule proposed by the DEC. The 100 acre wakesport zone is a vast improvement over the 50 acre zone and the 3000 ft minimum run is necessary for safety. I've lived on Joes Pond for 67 years and believe the new rule will prioritize safety and help protect the environment. I absolutely agree with these changes. As a kayaker, these boats are dangerous, not only from the wakes, but also from the fact that the drivers of them typically go fast and are paying as much or more attention to the riders behind them as they are to any other watercraft around them. Please make these changes.

Please be aware that we are wholeheartedly in favor of the new proposed rules for wakeboat sports in Vermont.

I have been a Thetford resident for over 40 years, and attended summer camp on Lake Fairlee and worked at same as a swimming counselor in my earlier years. I have paddled every summer in those 40+ years in both canoe and kayak, at any time of day or evening, with my daughter, older relatives, now grandchildren. I can attest that any wake boat on the lake at any time of day is a safety risk for any age paddler or swimmer. The ability to effectively monitor the use of wake boats on any single lake is also impossible. The spread of invasives is another valid concern. I and my family are adamantly opposed to any use of any wake boat on Lake Fairlee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer a comment on this critical decision.

Currently the total number of people in Vermont that are wake sports enthusiasts is very small compared to people who use our lakes for kayaking, fishing, water skiing etc. I'm not sure why we need to accommodate wake sports on any of our lakes when you consider the amount of damage to the lakes ecosystems and disruption to other boating/swimming that wake boats can cause. Also, who is going to be monitoring our lakes with wake boats to see that the new rules are being followed??

To the Agency of Natural Resources,

I attended a meeting, on January 16, 2026, arranged by Laura Dlugolecki and Jenny Austin to discuss possible changes to the rules already proposed for wakesports on small lakes. It was notable that most of the discussion centered on Lake Fairlee, possibly because the lake is of such importance to Thetford. As my Selectboard colleague, Li Shen, pointed out, the camps on the lake are vital to the Town's economy. Collectively, they are by far the largest taxpayers in Town.

Those who spoke in favor of wake boats on the lake were all from the same family (although they have different surnames) and all are residents of New Hampshire, although they have second homes on Lake Fairlee. Every other Thetford resident who spoke at the meeting was opposed to wakesports on Lake Fairlee.

One argument against the rules was made by a wake boat enthusiast who argued that because he is a responsible boater, therefore no rules were needed. This is akin to my stating that because I don't speed on the highway, therefore we don't need speed limits.

Those looking for "compromise" on the rules fail to recognize that you cannot compromise physical dimensions. The lake is too small to accommodate wake boats and non-wake recreational boaters. While I'm almost always in favor of compromise, there are certain situations where compromise is impossible, and this is one of those.

Bottom line, for reasons both of safety and the economic importance of the lake camps to Thetford's economy, I urge you to leave the rules as they were most recently proposed. I know that I speak for at least 4, and possibly all, of the 5 members of our Selectboard.

Again, thanks for reaching out.

Sincerely,

Steve Tofel

Thetford Selectboard Member

As a resident of Thetford who loves visiting our town beach ("Treasure Island") located on Lake Fairlee, I strongly oppose allowing any wakesports on Lake Fairlee. My kids are 5 and 7 years old and swimming at our town beach becomes much less safe for them when the waters get choppy from passing boats. The waves can get so bad that I get worried about them swimming out to the raft that is probably less than 50 feet from shore, even though an adult always accompanies them. My kids will also attend Horizons camp this summer and I know that swimming is a big part of the programming for kids. Anything we can do to keep kids safe is a top priority for me. Lastly, it is such a peaceful lake and the noise from boats going fast enough for wake sports are really just loud and disturb the peace of all lake users.

In June 2025, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposed amendments to the Use of Public Waters Rules (UPW) that would put more lakes off-limits to wake sports. Under the proposal, wake sports would no longer be allowed on Lake Fairlee.

I oppose the wake sports “compromises” that were proposed at the January 16, 2026 meeting. I am a year-round, longtime resident of Fairlee, VT who visits Lake Fairlee to kayak and swim several times each week in late spring, summer and fall. It has been such a peaceful place of camps for kids and recreation for people of all ages. Wake boats have no place on Lake Fairlee or other small-to-medium sized lakes and rivers.

The powerful waves that these boats create wreak havoc and hazards for swimmers, sailboats and paddlers (in/on kayaks, canoes and paddle-boards). Many using the lake are vulnerable young people or senior folk. The waves stir up sediments, fragment both native and invasive plants (damaging the native plants and spreading the invasive species), and destroy loon nests and fish habitats. The waves erode the shoreline, and can damage docks and docked boats, so the wave boat operators can be a source of large expenses for those residing on the lake.

The vibrancy of Lake Fairlee, both in terms of natural habitat and the economy, depends on a peaceful body of water that is safe for all. Limited the operating hours of wake boats doesn't help: The damage by wake boats occurs regardless of time of operation. Additionally, summer camps are active from early morning through the evening, and others use the lake throughout the day. Those working daytime jobs are at the lake early in the morning and after work.

Please do not allow the destruction of the Lake Fairlee habitat, recreational opportunities and ambiance by wake boats/wake sports. Please protect our small-medium lakes and rivers throughout Vermont. Native plant, bird and animal species, Vermonters, our family visitors and tourists (who contribute so much to our economy), and children at our camps (whose families likewise contribute so much to our economy)...

We are all counting on you, the Department of Environmental Conservation, to conserve our environment at Lake Fairlee and elsewhere. Please ban wake boats from small and medium lakes and rivers in Vermont. No compromises, no exceptions.

First, some historical background:

Walking is the oldest and most basic form of adult human locomotion. Because of this history, cultures afford pedestrians special status: pedestrians in public spaces have priority over vehicles—bicycles, motorcycles, cars, trucks. The concept is that the older, more basic transportation mode has priority. This is a rare concession to people who cannot afford (or prefer not) to be carried by something or someone else, and do so on their own feet. Similarly, a horse and rider has priority over bicycles and motor vehicles. (There are exceptions in special situations: a train has priority in its corridor—the train tracks—not because it is the older form of transportation, but because it is simply too massive to yield to everything that might cross its path; interstate highways do not allow bicycles or pedestrians, partly out of concern for their safety.)

Similarly, swimming and human- and wind-powered watercraft vastly pre-date motorized craft, and must be given the same consideration. Waterski boats, while in existence for perhaps 100 years, create smaller wakes than wakeboats do, and still yield to more-vulnerable water users such as swimmers, paddlers and sailors. Even a small boat with only a trolling motor must yield. Allowing wakeboats to dominate a public resource, taking priority over all other lake users, is lopsided. It places a higher value on wakeboat users than on all others using that resource. It is a complete reversal of traditional respect for those who, for whatever reasons, have less. It is the practical equivalent of allowing NASCAR or Formula One races on public roads, which we do not allow, for obvious reasons.

For the above reasons, I urge Vermont to completely disallow use of wakeboats on Shadow Lake in Glover, Holland Pond, Peacham Pond, Lake Parker, Lake Fairlee, and Harvey's Lake.

At the very least, Vermont must not weaken or compromise existing rules regarding wakeboat use on those water bodies as proposed by a small group of wakeboat advocates at the January 16, 2026 Agency of Natural Resources meeting convened by Laura Dlugolecki to "brainstorm alternative ideas and strategies to resolve conflict." I suggest that any conflict in this issue was generated by wakeboats and their users.

I have been informed that that meeting was held outside the formal public rulemaking process. This was perhaps a violation of Vermont's Open Meeting law.

As a resident, owner, and steward of shoreline property on Lake Willoughby in Westmore; I am very much opposed to the use of wake boats on our lake (and all lakes in Vermont). At the very least please ensure a home lake rule that will slow the pace of invasive species that will take hold in our lake when they are allowed.

To whom it may concern,

It is my understanding that the state of Vermont is going to implement rules for wakeboard craft that is sorely lacking in thoughtful and effective design and execution. Are you folks afraid of being sued by the manufacturers association or just misunderstanding your duty to protect the waters of Vermont for all Vermonters. It appears that you have summarily dismissed your duty to safeguard the value of our precious resources . Shame on you . This is not professional no matter how you couch it as being fair to all parties.

I think it would be great for me to introduce invasive species for my entertainment and pleasure. .

You gonna stop me? You gonna fine me ?

After the fact is too late folks .

Fairness be damnedlife is not fair.

Do you job

Myles Danaher

Brattleboro Vermont

I am in support of the proposed wake boat ban. I've seen first hand on other small lakes the disruption, erosion and damage these cause. They also effect the ability for other small boaters, paddles, swimmers to use the lake. I'd encourage the state to ban these on all small lakes.

Wake boats only belong on the largest bodies of water in Vermont!

I urge you to pass the proposed 100 acre WSZ and 3000' minimum wake sport run.

A wake boat sweet spot is 10-12.5 MPH, this translates into a 3minute -25 second run NOT INCLUDING turn around space NOT MUCH OF A RIDE!

The wave action of 16" will cause the lake bottom to be churned up, increase shoreline erosion, and spread invasive species. Vermont lakes belong to all of us (swimmers, canoe and kayak users, sport fisherman and paddle board users) and a wake sport which inhibits other recreational activities should only be allowed on our largest bodies of water.

I have often seen large wake hit our shoreline (Lake Parker) causing the water to become mud brown ending our swim time.The larger wake rocks floats to the point you cannot stand up or climb up onto the float safely.

Please keep wake sports on the largest bodies on the LARGEST lakes in VT.

Thank you Art Greenbaum

Wakesports

I support the the proposed changes to the guidelines for wakeboat allowance set backs and use on lakes in Vermont

Vermont. When these boats (driven within 100' of the shore) have the baffle filled, the large size of the wake erodes and damages the shoreline. This is most important in smaller lakes.

The lakes should be reserved for human powered recreation not motorized. The are a place for peace and rejuvenation not noisy and smelly motors.

I'm not sure why this type of craft is allowed anywhere, but imo, the WSZ size should be increased to 300 acres.

I suport the proposed changes to the Public Waters Rules. Wake boats should be restricted to larger lakes that will be less impacted ecologically, leaving smaller lakes to the many less impactful uses (swimming, small boats, fishing, and quiet enjoyment in general) for the much larger Vermont public

that does not own a wake boat. And the Vermont public wishes to preserve small lakes for the future, not speed up their demise by degrading lakes natural systems and ecology. Thank you.

I do not support wake boats on Lake Iroquois. As a neighbor who regularly kayaks and paddle boards on this lake I believe it is too small and it better suited to non motorized craft in general, other than trolling motors. There was a swimmer hit by a motor boat a number of years back, and wake boats seem even more dangerous to swimmers. Wake boats also disrupt the shoreline and significantly disturb the sediment in this shallow lake. The lake also suffers from milfoil, which motorized craft spread more rapidly.

As a state that values both public water access and a balance between human and environmental priorities, we should ban all wake boats, to be restricted only to federal navigable waterways (Lake Champlain). While the freedom to boat anywhere has a value, in the case of wake boats, they do so at the expense of all other water users. The most vulnerable parts of our lakes will be permanently affected with increased use of wake boats. The damage these watercraft inflict on our shared landscape far outweigh the brief thrill and fun experienced by the very few who are able to afford them. We've seen more water and boat users than ever on Vermont lakes and rivers, and our ability to set clear boundaries in regards to wake boats will prevent much conflict in the future.

Wake boarding is fundamentally incompatible with use on Vermont's lakes. As a marine engineer, naval architect, and USCG licensed captain, I am firmly convinced that issues of safety for other users and environmental damages to the shoreline justify banning the use of wake boats on any of Vermont's waters. The recreational preference of a very small number of users cannot override the public good. I support the proposed new regulations, and hope for further new regulations that will eventually end the use of these boats in Vermont.

My husband and I own property on Lake Fairlee. We enjoy being on the water in canoes, kayaks and SUPs. We enjoy playing at our tiny beach with our grandchildren (less than 5 years). We are grateful for the summer camps that line the shores and the campers that use the lake. However, we cannot use the lake when wakeboats are out--the force of the waves makes it unsafe to be on the water or even to be playing at the shore with tiny children. The young campers are not safe and we have witnessed youngsters struggle as wakeboats cause powerful, threatening surges in the water. We want to be safe on our lake, we want the campers--and the camps--to thrive. Wakeboats have no place on this small, a lake that is the summer home for children learning to love being on the water and adults seeking a safe place to paddle and enjoy all that Vermont offers.

Several years ago I was a greeter on Lake Morey and inspected boats coming into the lake and going out of the lake for invasive species. I enjoyed canoeing and swimming from different places on the lake as well. I have spent time on Lake Fairlee too. I am strongly supportive of the 100-acre rule, and prohibiting wake sports on Lake Fairlee. Thank you.

- 1) that wakesports zones are at least 3,000 feet in length
- 2) that the wakesports zone contain 100 contiguous acres of lake that is at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet of depth
- 3) there is an allowance for "shape normalization" of the wakesports zone to remove odd-shaped sections.

Wake boats are dangerous for canoers, kayakers, fishermen, paddle boarders, and anyone is a small boat. They make it impossible for us to go canoeing on any body of water with wake boats.

Lake Iroquois is a small lake with barely enough room to turn a large motor boat around. It is often crowded with people in small boats. The shores of Lake Iroquois are clay and easily eroded. Wake boats will increase erosion.

I Francine Pomerantz am writing in support of the new wake boat ruling to:

- Prohibit wake sports on up to 13 of the 30 lakes that currently allow them, including Lake Iroquois
- Increase the minimum wake sports safety zone from 50 to 100 acres
- Require a minimum wake sports run of 3,000 feet
- Expand the safety buffer from other users and structures from the current 200 feet to 500 feet
- Eliminate the Home Lake Rule, which reduces spread of invasive species, replacing it with required hot-water ballast tank decontamination for wake boats traveling between lakes

As someone who lives near Lake Iroquois and who has for years swam, canoed and kayaked there with their family I have great concern about wake boaters. Large wake boat waves travel largely under water and are silent. They can unexpectedly overwhelm a swimmer, paddler or boater. Additionally wake boater's vision is significantly impaired by the lifting of the bow due to heavy ballast.

Most people never report conflicts. They don't know who to call to register a complaint, and they are wary of open conflict. I have lately chosen not to swim or use Lake Iroquois for canoeing or kayaking because I've been afraid of the wake boats operating on the water. I would prefer there were no wake boats on Vermont waterways, but a minimum 100-acre zone will help provide more room for boats and offer greater protection to others.

by the lifting of the bow due to heavy ballast.

Most people never report conflicts. They don't know who to call to register a complaint, and they are wary of open conflict.

I have at times chosen not to go out because I've been afraid of the wake boats operating on the water. I would prefer not wake boats on Vermont waterways, but a minimum 100-acre zone will provide more room for boats and offer greater protection to others.

Thank you for taking my comments.

As one of the owners of Pearl Island on Joes Pond, it is highly important to my family that there be NO wakeboats on the Pond. They are eroding our small island land and the shoreline as well as being dangerous on the pond. Let's save Joes Pond before more damage is done. Even the high speed boats are a problem. Thank you.

I support DEC's new wake sport rules.

I would like the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to ben Wake boats from Lake Iroquois due to the number of Loon nests that may be adversely affected along the lake shore.

I strongly support additional restrictions on the use of wake boats so lakes can be safely enjoyed by swimmers, kayakers, canoes, and sail boats.

Public Comment on Proposed Wakesports Rule Changes

I strongly support the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed wakesports rule changes and urge DEC to strengthen the proposal by adopting the additional safeguards recommended by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes (RWVL).

The proposed changes—including a minimum 100-acre wakesports safety zone, a required 3,000-foot wakesports run, and expanded setback distances—are necessary to address the size, power, and wave energy produced by modern wake boats. These boats are fundamentally different from traditional motorboats and create risks that current rules do not adequately address.

On smaller lakes such as Lake Parker, these standards are especially important. A 100-acre WSZ and a 3,000-foot run would effectively prohibit wakesports on Lake Parker, which is appropriate given the lake's size, depth limitations, and heavy multi-use recreation. Allowing wakesports on lakes that cannot safely accommodate them puts paddlers, swimmers, anglers, and other boaters at risk.

I have personally experienced and observed how large wake boat waves can arrive suddenly and overwhelm smaller boats, kayaks, paddleboards, and swimmers, even at distances that appear safe. These wakes are not comparable to normal boat traffic and create hazardous conditions for users who did not choose to interact with wakesports activity.

For these reasons, I support strengthening DEC's proposal by adopting RWVL's recommendations, including:

- Increasing the minimum water depth from 20 to 30 feet
- Expanding setback distances from 500 to 700 feet from shorelines, loon nests, structures, and other lake users
- Clearly stating in the Use of Public Waters rules that wakesports are not a "normal" or traditional use of public waters
- Incorporating Precautionary Principle language to prioritize safety and environmental protection
- Ensuring invasive species prevention measures are at least as protective as current requirements

Vermont's lakes are shared public resources. The final rules must prioritize public safety, environmental protection, and equitable access for all users. I respectfully urge DEC to adopt its proposed rules with the strengthened protections recommended by RWVL.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

As the parent of 3 young children (and a boat owner) in the wider part of Lake Fairlee, I can attest to the impact of even the limited wake boat traffic we have had in recent years. On busy summer days it is impossible to safely have kids on the rafts in the water as the boats create enough wake to destabilize a small child. Our tiny sliver of beach is also at risk, and we have to hurry the kids out when we see the wake start to come in out of fear that they will not be stable enough in the water. I am so unclear on why we need to allow boats creating such significant wake on the lake. There are plenty of boats (and/or ways to drive current boats) that do not create this level of issue and concern for our families)

I am a physician (longterm resident) and safety must always take priority over fun. While wakeboards are not present every day when they are present we must bring the little toddlers in from the shoreline and boats for fear of swamping etc. My 88 year old mother had her kayak swamped as well. (she wears a life jacket now all the time) We are in a home directly affected by the wakeboarding zone and thus only the half of the peanut sized lake is in use for wakeboard. Funny that the only wakeboarding owners are not on that side of the lake. Four of the camps are on this side with novice (especially Ohana) boaters and it's not rare that we have to rescue a few here and there! We don't allow people to drive too fast on certain roads, smaller lakes need protection. I am a waterski boat owner and over the years also have cut back on my timing for tubing and skiing to protect the camps. That said when the wave boat is out no-one can ski or tube safely anyway and we all scam to the other side of the lake if we want to be safe. I am sorry for all the people that wrote in about injuries, we are lucky that we keep a close eye on the waterfront and have rescued the toddlers quickly. I appreciate there is one owner, and perhaps the solutions of grandfathering could be explored with caution, but if others bring a wake boat then two boats cannot possibly safely perform in the zones involved. Knowing when there might be a wake boat is so important and the fun of a few cannot override the safety of many.

I write in support of the proposed minimum wake sorts safety zone. I live near Lake Iroquois and have swum there for many years. This is a small lake and wake boats damage the shoreline and are a hazard to swimmers. I doubt most people register a complaint about their use. While any wake boat has the potential to be unsafe, I do not think it is fair to ban them entirely. However, increasing the minimum lake size to 100 acres and the buffer zone to 500 feet should alleviate the danger they pose and the damage they do to our small lakes here in VT.

I am a resident of Thetford, and am very much opposed to permitting wake boats on Lake Fairlee. I agree strongly with all of the arguments that have been presented against allowing wake boats - including the impact of these boats on campers' and residents' enjoyment of the lake, and concerns regarding invasive species. Please do not accommodate the wake boat industry against the interests of ordinary Vermonters.

Wake sports must be the most asinine, wasteful, polluting, egotistical sport ever and a complete antithesis of everything Vermont is supposed to be striving for. Why does the State, why does this committee, why does the governor, support it at all?

The Agency of Natural Resources has recognized the need to regulate wake boat use in Vermont, I applaud this decision and support the proposed new rules.

As a kayaker who was capsized by wake boat surf at Waterbury Reservoir, I can attest to the fact that the presence of wake boats makes paddlers reluctant to use Vermont lakes for recreational purposes. In fact, I have not returned to Waterbury Reservoir since this incident which occurred several years ago. Similarly, I also now, generally, avoid Lake Iroquois where wake boats also pose a threat to small boats. We need the new rules to help protect the lake habitat from invasive species, protect the shoreline from erosion due to the large waves generated by wake boats and protect the myriad of in-state and out-of-state paddlers who would like to enjoy these water bodies.

Wake boats do not need to be banned. I only request that the Agency of Natural Resources limit their use to areas of larger lakes consistent with scientific evidence. The new rules will help to accomplish this goal. Please protect our natural resources, our wildlife and our paddlers.

Hi my name is Fred Chapman and I most emphatically support the changes proposed. I live on Malletts Bay but enjoy many of the other lakes in the state that would be affected. Please make this as strong as possible.

I am in favor of all restrictions that will help protect and restore the water quality and fauna and flora around our lakes

I support the recent proposal on wake boats usage in our ponds and lakes, primarily for safety and environmental reasons. Traditional uses of these waters such as fishing, paddling, swimming, etc. are just not compatible with the powerful wakeboats going back and forth and are a real hazard for people participating in these activities. In addition, wakeboats harm the health of our lakes by increasing the risk of invasives such as milfoil as well as shore erosion. We all want good, healthy ponds and lakes.

Joe's Pond is just too small for wakesports. I have lived here for 26 years, and enjoyed sailing a Sunfish and kayaking, both of which have become less relaxing and certainly more risky if there is a wakeboat in the small area that is deep enough, long enough and far enough from shore to be currently allowed right in the middle of the biggest pond. That means everyone using this pond swimming or in a kayak, sailboat, paddleboat, small fishing boat, or paddleboard is at risk of large swells and capsizing while they're out there, going back and forth, back and forth in such a short distance I don't know how it can be fun for them. Now I am almost 80 and I'm pretty sure I can no longer upright my Sunfish if I capsize, and would need rescuing. Also, I have frequent relatives visiting with very young children playing in the water on my waterfront who get knocked down by the big waves. Of course they think it's fun, but the adults present have to be much more vigilant to prevent a tragedy.

As important is the spread of invasive species, currently milfoil at Joe's Pond, which is easily dispersed by props breaking of pieces of the plant and having it float around and replant itself all over the place. To say nothing of the water in the ballast tanks potentially carrying unseen invasive species from pond to pond.

There is no way wakesports can operate safely in an area as small as currently allowed and so close to shore. Please increase the acreage to at least 100 acres and make it 1000' from shore.

My name is Merrily Lovell. I enjoy kayaking in the summer on Lake Iroquois. Last summer I was able to bring my grandchildren there to do some enjoyable paddle boarding. I also check the lake weekly for Cyanobacteria as a volunteer for the Lake Champlain Committee. I have enjoyed occasionally seeing the loon couple and their family on the lake. I fully support the new rule. Lake Iroquois is small and exudes peace and beauty. The Lake Iroquois Association has had a long struggle with European Milfoil. It seems to have been reduced in the last few years. The disruption to wildlife, especially loons, and to swimmers, especially young children, and boaters, especially kayakers and paddle boarders, that wake boats cause is unacceptable. The spreading of invasive species is also a big issue. Wake boats do not belong on Lake Iroquois. It is a very valuable resource for Hinesburg and the surrounding towns. I want to state to protect it by prohibiting wake boats.

As an elderly person I was enjoying a ride in a pontoon boat when a Wakeboat cruised by, swamping us and nearly knocking me off my feet. I have enjoyed Lake Fairlee all my life as a young camper and now a year round resident. I served as chair of the LFA many years ago when we first discovered Milfoil and began our program to "control" the plants' spread. Surely Wakeboats with their turbulence are not helping in this effort. They do not belong on this small body of water as many scientific studies have shown.

I fully support the additional restrictions to wake boat activities on Joe's pond and other similar bodies of water. Within the state of Vermont. I own a home on the shore of Joe's pond and witness personally. The effects that these large wake have on my property and shorelines adjacent. Setting any distance stipulation is problematic because there are no clear demarcations. We can mark the lake surface with boundary lines, so the idea of adherence to any set distance is murky at best. Further, enforcement of such stipulations is complex for enforcement agencies. The stricter rules limit these weaknesses and protect the delicate shorelines of all bodies of water.

RE: DEC's Proposed Rule Changes re Wakesports

As a property owner on Lake Parker in Vermont, I fully support the DEC's proposed rule changes re wakesports on Vermont lakes. The expanded WSZ from 50 to 100 feet, a required minimum wakesports run of 3,000 ft, the expansion of the safety buffer from 200 to 500 ft, and the elimination of the Home Lake Rule will all insure increased safety for other lake recreational activities such as kayaking, paddle boarding, skiing/tubing, swimming, and fishing on Vermont's smaller lakes. Furthermore, the harmful impact on nature, both in the smaller lakes and along their shorelines, will be minimized by not allowing the extremely strong wave effects of wakesports vessels.

I am particularly concerned about the safety of children who might be enjoying activities on smaller lakes should a wakesports vessel go by. An increase in injuries on the water, and quite possibly deaths, would surely occur.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to support the proposed changes to the USE OF PUBLIC WATERS (UPW) RULES. Thank you.

~ Christine W. Kohn ~

I am writing in strong support for DEC's new wake sport rules. I spent much of my childhood on Lake Iroquois and still visit as often as I can. My best memories of the lake are of swimming, kayaking, and visiting the loons, geese, and turtles. This is a small and peaceful lake. Large boat wakes are not only noisy and disturbing to the wildlife, but also ecologically damaging and dangerous. The waves might not look like much until they suddenly overwhelm a swimmer or paddler. Most people don't file official complaints regarding wake boats, but that doesn't mean that conflicts don't happen. I personally decide not to go out on the lake if I see big wake boats out there. Simply put, Lake Iroquois is too small a lake to safely accommodate wake boats. A minimum 100-acre zone will provide more room and greater protection to everyone.

I am writing in strong support for DEC's new wake sport rules. I frequently visit my in-laws who live on Lake Iroquois. As a beginner kayaker, I know how quickly and powerfully wake boat waves can disrupt swimmers and paddlers. The lake is simply too small to safely accommodate wake boats. These boats are not only noisy and disturbing to wildlife, but also dangerous to people like myself with less experience on the water. Most people don't file official complaints regarding wake boats, but our bad experiences still detract from being able to enjoy the lake. The proposed rules will make the lake safer for everyone to enjoy.

i support the new regulations limiting wakeboats from more lakes. i have a small camp on joe's pond and use a kayak often. it is one of the pleasures of summer on the pond. i have not encountered one of those boats yet but the thought of being in a kayak and dealing with a huge wake like they produce is frightening, not to say extremely unsafe. curtailing them is a no brainer.

The rules should require a minimum operation distance of wake boats from shore of 1000 ft rather than 500 feet double the current distance.

I am a frequent visitor to Lake Iroquois, 50-60 days a season. I am an avid SUP paddler and distance swimmer. I support DEC's new proposed rules as they pertain to wake boats. Wakes from these boats can be annoying when paddling, and as a swimmer, the combination of waves and the reduced visibility for the boat driver adds to the risk for swimmers. I suspect (along with other factors) the wakes add to turbidity/reduced visibility within the water column, which isn't great. Thanks for revisiting this issue.

I am a Williston resident (near Lake Iroquois) and a property owner on Lake Eden. I am strongly opposed to any relaxation of wakeboarding regulations because Lake Eden has milfoil infestation that may be managed, but never eliminated. As for Lake Iroquois, it is a heavily used recreational resource in the heart of Chittenden county that will be seriously compromised by more wakeboard use, despite moderately successful though expensive milfoil management.

Both of these lakes have public boat launch ramps. Future use of these facilities will be compromised by increased access of wake board boats and future use of all other types of watercraft.

I support the proposed change in policy.

I strongly support the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed wakesports rule changes and urge DEC to strengthen the proposal by adopting the additional safeguards recommended by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes (RWVL).

The proposed changes—including a minimum 100-acre wakesports safety zone, a required 3,000-foot wakesports run, and expanded setback distances—are necessary to address the size, power, and wave energy produced by modern wake boats. These boats are fundamentally different from traditional motorboats and create risks that current rules do not adequately address.

On smaller lakes such as Lake Parker, these standards are especially important. A 100-acre WSZ and a 3,000-foot run would effectively prohibit wakesports on Lake Parker, which is appropriate given the lake's size, depth limitations, and heavy multi-use recreation. Allowing wakesports on lakes that cannot safely accommodate them puts paddlers, swimmers, anglers, and other boaters at risk.

I have personally experienced and observed how large wake boat waves can arrive suddenly and overwhelm smaller boats, kayaks, paddleboards, and swimmers, even at distances that appear safe. These wakes are not comparable to normal boat traffic and create hazardous conditions for users who did not choose to interact with wakesports activity.

For these reasons, I support strengthening DEC's proposal by adopting RWVL's recommendations, including:

- Increasing the minimum water depth from 20 to 30 feet
- Expanding setback distances from 500 to 700 feet from shorelines, loon nests, structures, and other lake users
- Clearly stating in the Use of Public Waters rules that wakesports are not a "normal" or traditional use of public waters
- Incorporating Precautionary Principle language to prioritize safety and environmental protection
- Ensuring invasive species prevention measures are at least as protective as current requirements

Vermont's lakes are shared public resources. The final rules must prioritize public safety, environmental protection, and equitable access for all users. I respectfully urge DEC to adopt its proposed rules with the strengthened protections recommended by RWVL.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I oppose of wake boats because of the severe environment impact on the shoreline

I oppose wake boats due to their severely harmful environmental impact on shorelines.

I agree with ANR's proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules (UPW). The proposed updates to the wakesports zone definition are:

- 1) that wakesports zones are at least 3,000 feet in length
- 2) that the wakesports zone contain 100 contiguous acres of lake that is at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet of depth
- 3) there is an allowance for "shape normalization" of the wakesports zone to remove odd-shaped sections.

I am very worried about the danger to children who will not understand the risk. It is unfair for a minority of people to put nature and people at risk for the purpose of a few hours of "fun"

I support restrictions on wake boats

I support strengthening the rules concerning wakeboats. I would prefer to see them banned but please regulate them to save our lakes and lake inhabitants.

I am submitting comments regarding the Vermont DEC's proposed amendments to the Use of Public Waters Rules (UPWR) regulating the use of wake boats on Vermont's inland lakes.

For background, our family has been coming to Lake Willoughby since the early 1960s and we own property at 87 Foster's Grove South in Westmore, Vermont. We were drawn to Willoughby by its pristine beauty, awe inspiring views and clear waters. It is majestic and recognized as such by the U.S. government with Willoughby's designation as a National Natural Landmark. Lake Willoughby is unique and needs to be preserved and protected to the greatest extent possible.

The proposed Regulations make several positive changes; however, they are inadequate for protecting Vermont's most beautiful and ecologically fragile lakes, and particularly Lake Willoughby.

My first choice by far would be to remove Lake Willoughby from the list of lakes on which wakesports are permitted and I believe there are ample reasons to do so.

If that is not possible, I fully support the following amendments to the regulations:

1. Reinstate the "Home Lake" rule. It is the most effective method for preventing the importation of invasive species from one lake to another.
2. Increase the DEC's minimum water depth from 20 to 30 feet.
3. Increase the DEC's minimum setback from shoreline, loon nests, and other lake users and lake structures from 500 to 700 feet.
4. Add to the UPWR document a statement defining and committing to applying the Precautionary Principle: "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."
5. Amend the UPWR to include a statement that wakesports are not a "normal" use and therefore require special consideration and rules differing from those that apply to "normal," i.e., traditional use. Additionally, there are two linked issues not addressed by the regulations: personal safety and enforcement.

I have Multiple Sclerosis and while significantly disabled, swimming, sailing, canoeing, and kayaking are water sports that I enjoy. All of them rely on relatively smooth water. The large wake produced by wake craft is antithetical to all these activities. If I were to be swamped or capsized by the wake from a boat, I would be unable to right myself without assistance. Placing me in a potentially life-threatening position unless either the wake boater stops to assist or another boater is nearby.

Increasing the setback distance from 500 to 700 feet would be a significant improvement; however, it must be made unmistakably clear in whatever setback rule is adopted, the non-powered watercraft such as canoes, kayaks or sailboats have the right of way and the wake boat operator must either move to another location or cease operating in wake mode. For example, if I am canoeing, it would be the wake boater's obligation to ensure that he or she maintains the minimum setback distance wherever I am in the lake. I also have a major concern that wake boaters will not be able to accurately determine the setback distance while participating in the sport.

As to enforcement, it appears that there is no mechanism or funding for enforcing the rules. Leaving everything from decontamination to setbacks and personal safety to the prerogative of the wake boater is unrealistic and likely to result in tragic consequences. Unless there is a method of documenting and enforcing non-compliance, the regulation is ineffective. Additionally, I have a major concern that disputes between wake boaters and others using the lake will result in heated arguments and potentially physical injury or damage to people or property.

Thank you.

I support the changes to prevent the use of wake boats on Lake Fairlee. The lake is fragile and too small for any wake boat use. Furthermore people who oppose wake boat use on Lake Fairlee are overwhelmingly long term residents in Post Mills with a real stake in the well being of the lake. Why is an overgrown water toy more important than the health of water quality, flora and fauna of this precious body of water, or for that matter the peace and safety of its residents. Wake boats have dislodged passengers on small water craft already. If someone has bought property on Lake Fairlee with the expectation that they could use a wake boat, that is their problem. They don't have the right to deluge other residents with their selfish goals or invite outside pressure in order to flood this comment page with opinions that will help them get their way.

I am opposed to any relaxation of the currently proposed rule change that would limit wakesports to 18 lakes in VT. I am frankly disturbed by the outsize influence of one New Hampshire family with a summer home on Lake Fairlee, who are pressuring ANR to "compromise" on this change. I do not understand why they should have precedence over the four youth camps that are located around the WSZ on L. Fairlee. Two camp directors at your "small meeting" were clear that wakesports are dangerous to children using stand-up paddleboards, kayaks etc. that have become a mainstay of water recreation and a key offering of the camps. And there are many other day users who are negatively impacted by wakesports as well. Wakeboats simply do not belong on small lakes and in particular on one where youth camps feature so prominently and in such close juxtaposition to a WSZ. Why are you considering forcing these two entirely incompatible uses together? It should be obvious from the comments at the meeting that they cannot coexist in a way that is fair to the traditional users of this lake. The campers and the canoes, anglers, swimmers, sailboats, paddleboarders kayaks etc are the "normal users" of Lake Fairlee who are supposed to be protected by ANR's Use of Public Waters Rules. Why is pressure from this one wakeboat-owning family more important than the 1800 campers and 300 staff who come to L. Fairlee each year? They make a huge contribution to the local economy and they carry on the revered camp tradition that has existed on Lake Fairlee since the early 1900s.

Many regular visitors on the Waterbury Reservoir will recognize me, as I am on the water 5-6 days out of the week for seven months of the year. I see wake-boats on the Reservoir regularly, at least one every weekend and more on busy and holiday weekends. All motorboats have an impact on the reservoir - these impacts are the same as the ones that wake-boats create, but the impact of wake-boats while in wake-sport mode is tenfold.

Dozens of times every week, motorboat operators violate the well-established 200 foot no-wake boundary that is intended to protect swimmers, paddlers, the shore, and protected species including loons. It is bad enough when a standard motorboat does this.

For paddlers and swimmers, this can ruin their visit by forcing them to be constantly rattled with oncoming wake, or even put them in outright danger. I have come to the aid of several paddlers who have been capsized by motorboats, including wake-boats. Because of the size of the waves produced, those capsized by a wake-boat are far more perilous, especially when the wake-boat operator is not obeying their required boundaries. It is only a matter of time before this causes serious injury or even death.

As for the shoreline, there are places around the reservoir where I can sit and watch soil slide into the water as the bank is battered with every passing boat. Not only does this muddy the waters - on a busy day I will notice the waters get increasingly opaque as more motorboats arrive - they imperil our natural shoreline and its ecosystems. Additionally, the eroded shoreline has begun to shrink several of the twenty-seven beloved remote campsites around the Reservoir. Again, the impact from wake-boats in this regard is vastly emphasized, even when they are within the approved zone 500 feet from shore. The fact is, 500 feet is not enough to meaningfully mitigate the damage done to the shore.

One of the things I appreciate the most about Waterbury Reservoir is that it can accommodate all manner of mixed use when the rules are followed. The fact of the matter is, the rules are often broken. With little meaningful law enforcement presence on the water, many are emboldened to do whatever they want and act selfishly. To be clear - the majority of motorboat operators on the Reservoir follow the law and a good time is had by all. But with hundreds of visitors to the reservoir every week, there are practically always one or two motorboats on the water that choose to disregard the requirements made to protect other visitors and the environment. Based only on casual observation, I would estimate that wake-boat operators disregard the law far more often on average than the standard motorboat operator.

I do my best to educate those who may not be aware of the requirements, but I choose only to approach those who seem friendly and at ease. Over the years I have been yelled at, insulted, and threatened with violence far too many times to make this a regular practice. On one occasion, a drunk motorboat operator even attempted to ram me with his boat when I tried to explain the regulations. Game Wardens were on the water more frequently this past season, which helped the situation greatly, but we need additional law enforcement presence in order to insure a safe recreational environment.

For these reasons, I believe that wake-boats should be banned from Waterbury Reservoir. The three arms that form the water body are simply too narrow in all places to comfortably allow for the use of these leviathans, and without the regular presence of police on the water to enforce the wake laws, even the new 500 foot zone is too often ignored. There is a place for wake-boats, but it is not Waterbury Reservoir. At least, not without enforcement. I recommend outright banning wake-boats at Waterbury Reservoir, or at the very least establishing law enforcement presence to keep visitors and the ecosystem safe.

Severe environmental impact on the shoreline

As a year-round resident and property owner in West Fairlee, I'm writing to express my strong support for the DEC's proposed wakesports rule changes and to emphasize that, for Lake Fairlee, these changes are both necessary and appropriate.

Lake Fairlee is a small, intensively used lake with a wakesports zone of approximately 90 acres. Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres would appropriately prohibit wakesports here and help protect public safety, ecological and wildlife health, and equitable access for swimmers, paddlers, and anglers. In my experience, wakesport activity on Lake Fairlee creates unsafe conditions and significantly diminishes enjoyment of the lake for other users.

Wake boats also pose serious risks to wildlife, particularly loons. Their large wakes can flood shoreline and island nests, displacing eggs or killing chicks, and increased boat traffic raises the risk of loon strikes and disturbance during critical nesting periods. These impacts are well documented and are incompatible with responsible stewardship of Lake Fairlee.

My interest reflects a long-term commitment to the lake and its future. I support the proposed rules, but I believe they do not go far enough. The elimination of the Home Lake Rule and the absence of stronger shoreline setback and depth standards leave Vermont lakes more vulnerable than necessary.

I urge DEC to adopt the proposed rules and to recognize that prohibiting wakesports on Lake Fairlee is consistent with public safety, environmental protection, and community values.

Thank you.

Enact the proposed rule changes.

No compromises!

It is ridiculous to allow wake boats on Lake Fairlee! My family has been on, around, and in Lake Fairlee since the 1970's and value its small, quiet aspect for canoeing and swimming. To have one family trying to dominate the activities on the lake is also outrageous, especially since a decision had already been made to ban these boats! Go with the sensible majority opinion for heaven's sake!! Sally Duston Whitlock, Thetford

I am an avid paddler who has been enjoying Vermont Lakes for 50 years now, and many of the proposed lakes open to wake boats are among the ones I have paddled, most worrisome being Waterbury reservoir. I can put up with an occasional yahoo going at reckless speeds and admire the beauty of slalom water skiers despite the wake from their boats, but they all pale in comparison to the wake from the specialized wake boats, which I have witnessed pounding the shore, and also sending SUP paddlers into the drink.

I believe the only lake really suitable in Vermont is Champlain, where their impact is diffused by its size, , but I'm willing to live with this whittled down list of acceptable coexistence spots between the self powered and powered communities. However, there is considerable irony in a type of boat, whose use is basically totally encounter productive to the signs at every state put in about making sure invasive weeds and species are not spread. And I'm also peeved that a highly specialized sport used by a small number of people whose impacts are clearly deleterious to Vermont Lakes should be given accommodation at the expense of so many other users.

As a person who uses a canoe, I wholeheartedly support the changes to the use of public water rules although they do not go far enough. Protecting the state's lakes is important. Protecting the people who value quiet recreational activities on the water is equally important.

I am in full support of the proposed change to increase the buffer zone required for wake sports.

I myself am a recreational boater and I believe wake boats infringe upon everyone (except the few that can afford one) ability to enjoy many of Vermonts public inland water ways.

I would also support limiting the length of recreational boats on Vermont smaller bodies of water. The intent would be to prevent 30'+ cabin cruisers on a small lake such as Waterbury Reservoir.

I the amended rules for wakeboat use which is proposed. I have a camp on Sunset Lake in Benson. The lake is small and tranquil. Wake boats would create a great disturbance. Every owner of property that I have talked to agrees.

I have lived in Thetford since 1973, 15 of those years in Post Mills within walking distance of Lake Fairlee. I have swum, snorkeled, paddled, sailed, rowed, hiked, picnicked, skated, bird watched, and even fished in, on, and around Lake Fairlee numerous times. A significant majority of the people who live near Lake Fairlee and make regular use of it are, like me, happy that it is a multi-use lake, but that same majority is very unhappy that wake sports have recently appeared on such a small, narrow, and relative shallow lake. That same significant majority believes very strongly that this is a use that should be banned, not only from Lake Fairlee but from all lakes of its size and demographic. Wake boats are not simply a "use", they are an invasion of the lake. They damage the shoreline, upset wildlife and humans as well as aquatic creatures, disturb the emotional atmosphere, and ruin the experience of everyone except the wake boaters. Please do NOT alter the proposed new rules. They have been worked on and argued over for long enough. They are intended to serve the majority, not just the very small minority rich enough to own a lakeside cottage and a wake boat.

My concern is about the process that keeps reshaping a rule that was just finalized in 2024 after years of public input and scientific review.

Right now, it feels as if the state is responding more to pressure from a single interest group than to verified scientific findings or real world data. And when rules shift due to pressure rather than evidence, it undermines public trust in the rulemaking process.

The Agency of Natural Resources' own mission emphasizes three things:

- Science based decision making
- Public trust resource management
- Balanced use of Vermont waters

These principles are clear. Yet if the rule change cannot be supported by:

- ✓ Measurable data
 - ✓ Demonstrated safety impacts
 - ✓ Documented enforcement trends
- then it simply does not meet that standard.

And right now, the data does not show a problem.

For both 2024 and 2025, there have been:

- Zero reported violations
- Zero enforcement actions
- Zero tickets issued by Fish & Wildlife or State Police

In summary, there have been No documented safety incidents tied to wake boats under the current 2024 rules.

It's important to remember something else: The 2024 rule was already one of the most restrictive in the country (which is in direct opposition to ANRs least restrictive guidance), requiring wake sports to occur only in zones at least 50 acres, 500 feet from shore, and 20 feet deep—parameters that the ANR itself determined were scientifically supported and adequate for protection of Vermont waters. Even after extensive public comment and pressure for tighter limits at the time —the ANR concluded that the scientific literature did not support expanding the restrictions further.

Yet now, despite the lack of new data and despite the absence of enforcement issues, the rule is again being reconsidered.

Constantly moving the goalposts does not reflect science based policymaking. It reflects policy driven by advocacy pressure rather than evidence.

I urge the Agency to honor its mission, uphold the integrity of the 2024 rule, and refrain from changing it without clear, objective, verifiable data showing a need. Vermonters deserve rules that are stable, science driven, and fair—not rules that shift because one group demands it.

Public Hearing Statement: Vermont Water Use Rules

Good afternoon. Thank you for the time to speak.

I have been invested in these hearings for over three years. During that time, I have asked—verbally and in writing—for the actual scientific data that validates the need for these additional restrictions. I have never received it. For those of us who wakesurf, we have already compromised reasonably and without complaint. But now we are being pushed further to reduce the number of lakes we can access—again, without evidence. Recent hearings have made it clear that for the opposition, there is no "middle ground." Their endgame is not collaboration; it is complete abolishment.

We also need to be honest about Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). AIS was in Vermont long before wake boats and will remain a challenge even if they are banned. AIS is a universal boating issue—motorized and non-motorized alike—and it requires a separate, honest conversation, not a targeted restriction on one group.

The ANR's mission is built on science-based decision making and balanced use. If a rule isn't backed by measured impacts and enforcement trends, it fails that mission. Right now, this process feels driven by interest-group pressure rather than verified findings, which undermines public trust.

Before expanding restrictions, the state must provide:

Scientific studies supporting the 3,000-foot requirement.

Ecological justification for a 100-acre minimum.

Documented data proving that current rules—which have been in place for less than a year—are failing.

Advancing further restrictions by 2026 based on petitions rather than Vermont-specific research is premature. We should be fact-checking claims, not rushing to eliminate a sport based on unsubstantiated pressure.

Thank you.

I am a homeowner on Lake Fairlee in Vermont and I would like to ask that you please maintain the DEC's Proposed rule changes that would PROHIBIT wake sports on Lake Fairlee.

I have had numerous negative experiences with the wake boats on Lake Fairlee which have included being knocked off of my paddleboard and swamped in a kayak. It has become so dangerous that I will no longer go out on the water if the wake boat is on the lake.

The waves created by the wake boats crash upon our beach and create dangerous conditions for my 4 yo and 2 yo grandsons while they are playing on the shore. The waves have also damaged our seawall over the years to the point that the wall is crumbling into the lake.

I support the DEC proposal but do feel it should be strengthened by adopting the RWVL rule changes. The minimum 100-acre WSZ will serve to protect campers and all lake users, and I ask that your group not to compromise the safety of all of us. The leadership teams from all of the lake camps, the selectboards and the Lake Fairlee Association do not want to compromise on any of the proposed measures- they all want wake sports prohibited on Lake Fairlee. There appears to be a majority with the opinion that wake sports are not safe for lake Fairlee and yet the small vocal minority - a family with a wake boat on the lake- seeks to achieve a compromise . There should be no room for compromise when it comes to the safety and welfare of all users of the Lake.

I would ask that the DEC please maintain the rule as CURRENTLY proposed and allow no compromises on safety and wake sports. I ask that you decide to prohibit wake sports for the continued safety of all lake users , campers, paddlers, water skiers, anglers, sailors and to NOT succumb to the pressure from a small group of wake surfers and the boating industry.

Wake sports are creating dangerous conditions for all of us who enjoy recreating on Lake Fairlee. They should be prohibited from a lake the size of Lake Fairlee and I ask that the DEC maintains the rule as currently proposed as thus prohibit the use of these boats on Lake Fairlee

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce W Bunnell MD
480 Bragg Road
Thetford, VT

I support DEC's proposed wakesports rules but believe they do not go far enough. Setbacks should be increased to 700 feet from shore and sensitive areas, and the minimum operating depth should be 30 feet, not 20, to adequately protect public safety and lake ecosystems, including Lake Parker.

I support DEC's proposed wakesports rules but believe they do not go far enough. Setbacks should be increased to 700 feet from shore and sensitive areas, and the minimum operating depth should be 30 feet, not 20, to adequately protect public safety and lake ecosystems, including Lake Parker.

Keep these annoying wakeboats off of lakes that are obviously too small to support them. These boats are designed with Lake Powell in mind - not Vermont lakes that will see lakefronts destroyed as a result of their presence.

In regards to wakesports, I support the new rule, especially the 100 acre minimum wake sports zone and the 3000' run requirement, on Joes Pond. Thank you.

I live on my family property, Lake Parker in West Glover, owned since 1950. I strongly support the changes that will protect the shoreline, wild life and continued peaceful enjoyment of beautiful Parker pond.

1/29/26

To Whom it May Concern:

I have written two letters earlier regarding the threat of wakeboats to our lakes and to Willoughby Lake specifically. For real data and examples of "near-misses," please look at those letters. The data has been well documented and reported. I have little to add to that measure of the dangers of wakesports on our inland lakes. But I thought a story might help convey my strong feeling that wakesports have no place on our inland lakes in Vermont.

Please read the following parable for the moral and lesson. All the characters are made-up and the location is fictional:

The fluorescent lights in the town hall basement hummed, nearly drowning out the quiet panic of Councilwoman Sarah Jenkins. Before her lay the proposed "Shoreline Stability and Recreational Safety Ordinance," a document designed to prohibit wakeboats from operating in less than 20 feet of water or within 500 feet of shore.

"It's perfect," said Mark, the lake association president, tapping the paper. "It stops the 4,000-pound wake-machines from tearing up the lake-bottom, introducing invasive species, and destroying the loon nesting sites."

"It's unenforceable," Sarah muttered, rubbing her temples. "Mark, look at the budget. We have one part-time marine patrol officer, Joe, and his boat needs a new propeller."

"Then we pass it, and we let the threat of it do the work," Mark insisted. "Fear of a \$500 ticket."

Sarah knew it was a farce. The state was too broke to help with enforcement, and the local tax base was shrinking. But the noise—the relentless thumping of the enormous the boats on the water and the sound of waves crashing against docks from the massive wakeboats—was driving the residents crazy. The concern for the future of the pristine lake was at stake. They needed a win.

Against her better judgment, she moved to pass it.

Three weeks later, the Ordinance passed 4-1. The signs were posted: No Wake Surfing Within 500 Feet. The first Saturday of July, the lake was packed. A massive, neon-green wakeboat, the "WaveCrusher," sat 100 feet from the public beach, idling while its occupants surfed. The wake was colossal, sending a kayak into the cattails and tossing a pontoon boat like a toy.

Joe, the lone, part-time officer, sat in his worn-out patrol boat, looking at his watch. He had two hours left on his shift. He looked at the WaveCrusher, then at his budget sheet, which reminded him that the town couldn't afford to pay him overtime to fight a legal battle against a \$200,000 boat's insurance company.

He sighed, steered his boat toward the marina to pick up a lost life vest, and ignored the roaring, artificial wave.

On the shore, Sarah watched the whole thing from her dock. The law was on the books. The lake felt just as broken as before. She realized then that a piece of paper, passed in a dark room at the State House, meant nothing against the force of a 4,000-pound,,, unregulated wave.

Albert Einstein said: "Nothing is more destructive of respect for the government and the law of the land than passing laws which cannot be enforced." Let's not do this with our wakeboat legislation. Changing the decontamination requirements and eliminating the Home Lake Rule only puts our lakes in more jeopardy. As one participant wisely said in Tuesday night's meeting in Brandon, VT : "You can't legislate good judgement." And until we can, let's just keep the wakeboat off the inland lakes all together.

With respect,
Peggy Zimmer
Westmore, VT

I fully support the proposed changes. Safety is my biggest concern. The waves generated from these boats make it very unsafe to swim, paddle board, kayak on our small Joes Pond. We also are fighting a milfoil infestation and the effect of the disruption of the bottom of the pond could send particles of the milfoil all over the pond making eradication nearly impossible. Please adopt the proposed changes.

I am a seasonal resident on Sunset Lake in Benson (392 Hyatt Camp Rd). I FAVOR the new rule regarding wakeboats. Sunset is a small pristine lake - we want to keep it that way. Wakeboats are antithetical to that precious environment. I totally support these proposed changes.

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule changes. I am writing to you in opposition of the proposal. We have family ties to Newark Pond dating back to the 1960's. We purchased a year round property on the water to expand the space available for the family, who regularly partakes in water sports activity. We did so knowing that the body of water was already restricted from allowing PWCs, which also restricted value of the property. Notably, PWCs are far less risky or damaging to both animals and other users of the water, so why are those banned?

If the proposed changes are enacted, the body of water that our family has been enjoying for decades will now no longer allow wakesports. This will further devalue the properties owned by the family, and almost certainly will not be reflected in property assessments and taxes paid. Thus, it represents a direct harming of residents by the state.

Thank you.

I had never heard of wake sports before reading about these regulations. I am appalled that this "sport" is even allowed at all. It is such an invasive use of ponds and lakes. This practice is undoubtedly disturbing to animals that live in this habitat and need safe places to raise their young. It is also profoundly disturbing to people who want to enjoy nature. Why do people have to hog up natural resources that include peace and natural beauty? Not to mention the fossil fuels wasted to create the wakes. Thank you for your concern.

I support DEC's proposed rule.

I have advocated for stronger regulation, and I am still concerned, particularly about aquatic invasive species. But this is a step forward, and I strongly support that.

Wake sports are relatively new in Vermont, and only a tiny minority of boaters. Wake sports are not a "normal use" under the Use of Public Waters Rules. We keep hammering away at this point because normal use is central to the rules. Humans are humans -- pushing boundaries, testing limits, striving for the Next Best Thing. This causes conflict.

The rules provide a roadmap for resolving such conflicts: 1) use conflicts must be managed in a manner that provides for normal uses to the greatest extent possible; 2) solutions must adequately address the conflicts, though in the least restrictive way possible; 3) separating conflicting uses by place is a good solution; and 4) the rules must consider the best interests of current and future generations and must ensure that natural resources are fully protected.

Wake sports uniquely disrupt normal uses like water skiing, swimming, paddling, sailing, fishing, etc. They cannot share the water safely with others. They also cause significant environmental damage especially in small lakes.

The proposed rule protects lake ecology and normal uses on Vermont's smallest lakes and ponds while still providing generous opportunities for wake sports. The rule maintains wake sport access on 18 inland lakes and all the border lakes. DEC's rule honors the priority given to managing vessels, by separating conflicting uses into separate places. By protecting our smallest lakes and ponds, DEC ensures that future generations will continue to enjoy them. I wish the proposed rule could be even stronger.

But thank you for your hard work. I support the proposed rule as written.

Please keep wakeboards out of our lake!

Shadowt Lake, Glover, Vermont

I moved to Shadow lake in Glover, Vt 10 years ago for one primary reason. The beautifully clear and clean lake. During our house hunt, looked at many other lakes in NH and VT but many were stricken with milfoil, and did not appeal to us. We were encouraged Shadow lake would remain so due to an active lake association, an effective boat wash station, and a restriction of Personal water crafts. The lake is a gem for all. Kayaking, standup paddle boarding, swimming, and fishing are its mainstays. The small footprint of the lake also discourages speed boating and water skiing. It is a calm family friendly lake.

Please help keep Shadow lake the lake it was when we moved here. There aren't enough clean clear lakes around, it would be a shame to let one of the remaining few be irretrievably damaged by these wake boats. We owe it to our children to preserve the beauty which makes Vermont so special and the envy of so many

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources – DEC

Watershed Management Division, Lakes and Ponds Program

1 National Life Drive

Montpelier, VT 05620-3522

RE: Opposition to Proposed Wake Boat Regulation Amendments

Dear Commissioners,

I am submitting this comment to express my opposition to the proposed changes to Vermont's wake boat regulations, specifically:

- Expanding the required operating distance from other users from 200 feet to 500 feet, and
- Increasing the minimum size of designated wake sport zones from 50 acres to 100 acres.

After reviewing the proposal, I do not believe these revisions are necessary, practical to enforce, or supported by evidence showing they would improve safety or environmental protection.

1. Proposed 500-Foot Operating Distance

The new rule would require wakeboats to remain 500 feet from all other vessels, swimmers, docks, kayaks, and shorelines. Current regulations already require a 500-foot buffer from shore and a 200-foot buffer from other users- standards that apply broadly to motorized boats.

Several concerns arise with the proposed expansion:

- Creating a separate, significantly larger setback for wakeboats introduces inconsistent rules that will confuse operators and complicate enforcement.
- Even at 200 feet, judging distance on open water is challenging without specialized tools. Expecting operators to accurately maintain 500 feet by sight alone is unrealistic and would likely reduce compliance.
- At extended distances, it becomes harder, not easier, to see swimmers, small craft, or buoys. This could unintentionally increase risk rather than reduce it.
- The requirement would force operators to constantly scan for potential hazards far beyond the range where meaningful interaction occurs, diverting attention from closer, more immediate safety considerations.
- Wakeboats operating in wake sport mode typically travel around 10–11 mph, much slower than traditional ski boats. At these speeds, the existing 200-foot buffer already provides ample time for hazard detection and avoidance.
- When not engaged in wake sport mode, wakeboats function like any other ski boat and should not be subject to stricter rules.
- The expanded buffer could also be misused by individuals intentionally positioning themselves within the 500-foot zone to obstruct lawful, safe wake sport activity.

2. Proposed Increase in Wake Sport Zone Size (50 Acres to 100 Acres)

Doubling the minimum required acreage for wake sport zones would effectively eliminate access on many lakes where wake sports have been enjoyed safely for decades under the current 50-acre standard.

These lakes have long histories of responsible use without documented safety issues that would justify such a substantial increase. The proposal does not appear to be based on lake-specific conditions, user behavior, or empirical data demonstrating that a 100-acre minimum provides additional safety or environmental benefits.

Without clear evidence that doubling the acreage requirement improves outcomes, this change would unnecessarily restrict access for responsible boaters and limit a legitimate recreational activity.

Wake sports are an important and valued part of Vermont's outdoor recreation culture, supported by families and communities who prioritize safe and respectful boating. Vermont already has some of the most stringent wake boat regulations in the country. Adding further restrictions without strong justification risks reducing fair access to public waters without delivering meaningful public benefit. I respectfully urge the Department to reconsider these proposed amendments and instead focus on education, consistent enforcement of existing rules, and continued collaboration with the boating community. A balanced, data-driven approach will best support Vermont's safety, environmental, and recreational goals.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing stewardship of Vermont's lakes and ponds.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grant Smith
Westmore, VT

I urge you to adopt the Rule Change for wake sports. Wake sports allowed currently are dangerous to swimmers, paddlers, boaters, and cause environmental damage. The change is necessary to protect small lakes and the people using them by increasing the safety buffers from other users.

I've worked at the boatwash at Shadow lake in Glover for the last 7 years so I've seen the action on the lake. We were quite busy in the summer, mostly with small outboards, kayaks, paddle boards and people that swim across the lake. That's the way it's been for many years and why many homes have been built around the lake to enjoy. Safety concerns are paramount for the people using the lake. Shadow lake is one of the few lakes in Vermont with NO invasive species. Bilges on wake boats can't be 100% inspected or cleaned which is a red flag for invasion. Our boat wash station is not equipped to handle proper inspections and decontamination procedures on wake boats. Shadow lake is a small lake like a neighborhood street and should be treated like that. If you want to cause chaos with high powered machines you go to a race track or large lakes where you can run free.

My name is Peggy Stevens. I live on Echo lake in east Charleston. I have submitted numerous comments previously, stressing my concerns for spread of AIS, concern for public safety of other non-wake boat recreational users, and utter inability for any of these "limits on wake boat users" to be enforced. Those concerns still stand with these new rules. I am resubmitting because I answered "other" in a previous comment and I think that may have made my comment moot.

It is hellish that I have to say I agree with the latest rules in order to be heard at all.

Given Echo is about 500 acres I cannot swallow a 300-acre wake boat zone if that is truly the case. Even a fifty-acre zone is unacceptable.

In my recent written comment, I noted that, with this year's drought, Echo's acreage is down severely- and the area considered twenty-foot depth is also wholly inaccurate now.

Legacy phosphorus will much more easily be scoured up and released, raising our Phosphorus levels precipitously. We have been fighting to protect our water quality here on Echo Lake, mitigating runoff in many various ways and working with the Town to repair roads and culverts to avoid storm damage and consequent Phosphorus runoff.

I have been working with the Echo Lake Protective Assn. for more than thirty years, as have many others. Our work will be undone in a flash. Human and financial resources dedicated to protecting our lake will be down the tubes- these include many state resources, squandered.

Please continue to revise and make ever more strict the rules governing wake sport boats. Clean water, such as is found in our A1 eligible lake, which we have petitioned to have reclassified as A1, is a finite resource that cannot be restored once degraded.

Why Vermont allows wealthy people (given the cost of wake sport boats) to destroy the peace, tranquility, safety and environmental health of our beautiful lakes is beyond me, beyond reason and beyond our moral imperative to protect our natural resources for future generations..

I am a co-owner of land at Shadow Lake in Glover, Vermont. The current rule by DEC does not go far enough to adequately protect Vermont's lakes and ponds, including Shadow Lake, from damage caused by wakeboats. It allows wake sports on many lakes and ponds too small to accommodate them safely. Shadow Lake is particularly vulnerable because of the low water level necessitated by the state of the dam. It has also recently been the home to a nesting pair of Loons, who are easily disturbed by too much boat traffic.

I have been a resident on the north side of Lake Fairlee for over 40 years. I support the regulations as they stand and believe they are just a first step. I reject the so-called compromise for Lake Fairlee that allows 2 people to have limited use of wake boats on the lake. The ecological health of Lake Fairlee is already severely compromised and any action allowing wake boats will further negatively impact the health of the lake. The wake boat industry should have NO say in this issue - they are neither residents nor users nor members of our community. The use of wake boats is not a "normal" use - they have severe impacts on both the lake systems and on the safety of other users. I also object the removal of the "home lake" rule which has been one of the best tools we have for preventing the spread of invasive species from lake to lake.

I am in support of the proposed amendments to the Use of Public Waters Rules that would require a wakesports zone to include >100 contiguous acres at least 500 feet from shore and at least 20 feet deep.

I farm in Corinth and kayak, paddle board, and sail on small lakes including Lake Fairlee. The use of a wakeboat in small lakes would prevent me and others from using the lake for these recreational activities. In addition, they will damage the lake ecosystem, leading to longterm harm of fishing. The short term and long term loss of recreation will negatively affect the economy of the communities surrounding these lakes (an ice cream from Jan's in Fairlee always comes after recreation on the lake). Traditional lake uses and wake sports on our inland lakes are incompatible. Vermont has more than adequate large open waters where wake sports can be enjoyed without disrupting traditional users (Champlain, Memphramagog, CT River lakes and even Bomoseen. Your proposed rules are a step in the right direction. Thank you for your work on this important issue. CS

I support the new rule changes

I write in support of the new draft of public waters rules.

I support the new USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE relative to wake sports requiring 500 feet from shore, other boats, docks and especially loon nests. We have worked very diligently for several years at Shadow Lake, in Glover, to control and finally eradicate Eurasian water milfoil; the use of wake boats on the lake would clearly endanger the results of all that effort. Wake boats should remain in only one lake.

I have observed the negative impact on traditional recreational activities (kayaking, paddleboarding, canoeing, waterskiing, sailing, etc.) from Wakesports and the large waves created impacting those traditional activities and associated adverse safety concerns. Therefore, I support all of DEC proposed rule changes from the 2024 rules. Without speaking to all of the proposed rule changes I support I would just like to highlight two specifically. The need to increase Wakesports Safety Zone (WSZ) from 50 to 100 acres and require a minimum of 3000 feet run. These alone are so critical to minimize the large wakes impacting traditional recreational activities and creating a much safer environment. Thank you DEC for proposing these additional rule changes to further increase SAFETY on Vermont lakes and ponds.

I am against the use of Wakeboats in small ponds and lakes in Vermont. The disruption is far greater than the benefits to those who do this sport. Please keep our Vermont lakes and ponds peaceful.

When the first wakeboat rules were being adopted, I wrote:

"It is becoming harder and harder to have truly natural experiences in Vermont. The very things that make Vermont Vermont face significant pressure - from development, noise, technology, etc. Serene fishing or canoeing or kayaking outings are more and more difficult. Aquatic life and waterfowl are in a constant dance with human machinery, evidenced recently by the death of Vermont's oldest known loon by suspected boat strike.

My biggest concern may be that if we do not prohibit or significantly constrain wake boat use then how will we justify restricting use of the next generation of adventure boats (and there will be a new generation of such boats as people seek ever more novel thrills) and the one after that? DEC needs to ask/decide 'Is this just too much?'

In the end, while I wish those rules had been more restrictive, I believed they were a good start. Those first rules did not fully consider safety concerns, though DEC indicated they would return to them. Now is the time to fulfill that commitment.

I am glad that DEC is strengthening those rules to promote natural experiences and to improve protections for wildlife already so imperiled.

Please adopt these rules. Don't water them down — especially the minimum 100-acre wakesports zone requirement and the minimum 500-ft safety buffer.

I write in support of the new draft USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE. It includes common sense guidelines for the safety of both humans and wildlife.

As an avid boater and outdoor enthusiast, I fully support the proposed changes to the Use of Public Waters Rules. For safety reasons I believe the increase from 50 to 100 acres, as well as the extension of the run to 3000 feet will help with the safety of the sport and help minimize the impact on other users of the waterways in the vicinity. Large wakes close to shore and operating in shallow depths have proven to negatively impact the shore line on small bodies of water, so this change would certainly help minimize the current impact on small lakes.

As a paddle boarder wakeboarding is very disruptive. Vermont lakes need to be for all and wake boats cause a major disruption. Please ban them from more lakes

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because wildlife is abundant both in our lakes and around them. It is important to keep them safe and to provide them with a habitat in which they can flourish. These lakes are home to loons, eagles, mink, otters, herons, snapping turtles, and many fish species. In addition, the largest number of users on Vermont's inland lakes are low-impact users, such as, swimmers, kayakers, canoeists, fisher-people, standup paddle boarders, nature photographers, adaptive sports users, water-skiers, motorboat users, etc. We cherish our lakes and public waters, please keep them this way!

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because:

Of the surface threats to other vessels, swimmers, and paddlers

Near shoreline disruptions and erosion

Damage to shoreline structures impacted by these wakes

Nutrient release events to the water

The amended rule will conserve the water quality and recreational safety of the Waterbury Reservoir, along with many other lakes similarly situated

I am a Thetford, Vermont resident. In the spring, summer & fall I swim at least several times per week in Lake Fairlee, if not daily, when the weather cooperates. I also swim in Lake Morey, and I paddle my kayaks in both lakes.

I am a distance swimmer, so although I mostly begin my swim at Treasure Island, I swim outside their bathing area. I also swim from a friend's dock at the opposite end of the lake. I always have a buoy attached to me so I can signal a boat if it is coming within my range. But not everyone is paying attention. The wake boats create huge waves that can overpower a swimmer, kayaker, or paddleboarder. This makes me feel unsafe & uncomfortable to be out in the water, not knowing what type of boat one might encounter while swimming or paddling. I am in favor of stricter regulations for these boats, if not the elimination of them on these and Vermont's small lakes in general. Besides being extremely concerned about myself and the swimmers & paddlers safety, I also can see that these wake boats are increasing the erosion of and forever changing our shorelines. I have noticed a significant change in the cloudiness and disturbed nature of the water quality within these 2 lakes, too. I also travel to and swim and/or kayak in Willoughby, Caspian & Shadow Lakes, as well as Joe's Pond, Crystal Lake & Waterbury Reservoir. I also fear for the loons and other wildlife on Lake Fairlee & Lake Morey. We are very fortunate that they have chosen these lakes to raise their young, and the unpredictability of these enlarged waves can only make their existence more difficult if not tragic.

Knowing that ballast tank water alone can spread aquatic plants such as zebra mussels & milfoil seems like a no-brainer to strengthen regulations, if not prohibit wake boats, since we've been working to rid our lakes of these invasive plants for many years at a huge cost to towns and taxpayers.

I sincerely hope you will consider these safety issues, coupled with the environmental damage these boats are causing to these important natural resources, our wonderful Vermont lakes.

I have just sent a comment and wanted to be clear that I'm asking the DEC to support the proposed 100-acre rule, which would prohibit wake SPORTS (not wake boats) on Lake Fairlee.

Thank you for taking the time to review all comments before making your decisions.

I support any rule that will keep wake boats off our small lakes and ponds. I'm at Joe's Pond in Cabot and Danville - wake boats have destroyed shoreline, frightened swimmers, canoists, kayakers and others using smaller watercraft, and are highly suspect of bring Eurasian watermilfoil into our lake.

My name is Ginny Lawless. My husband and I have had a camp on Lake Parker since the late 80's. Over the years we have had the pleasure of witnessing the natural beauty of our lake. I have come to feel connected to the lake environment as well as respectful of the opportunity to be an active steward, attempting to protect its natural beauty and ecological health.

I believe that supporting the revisions to the UPW rules is one way in which lake protections can be strengthened. I support all of the revisions and specifically the 100 acre wake sports zone as it will better address safety concerns, cumulative impacts from multiple wake boats, and reduce conflicts between recreational users. I also support the 3000 foot run for wake boat operation, the 500 foot buffer zone for nesting loons and the 500 foot safety offset between wake sports and other users.

I do not support exceptions to the 100 acre threshold, including allowing wake sports at certain times of day or one boat at a time.

Based on the most recent studies, I believe that the minimum depth should be increased to 30 feet to reduce sediment and latent phosphorous disturbance.

I thank the Vermont ANR for its efforts to protect inland lakes and ponds.

Thank you.

merit.scotford@gmail.com

Please don't allow wake sports on Lake Fairlee. We are Post Mills residents and use the lake often. My grandchildren are now afraid their kayaks will be swamped. My children don't like to take them in the canoe for fear they will tip over. It is impossible to swim laps at Treasure Island because of the waves. There are many larger lakes in the area for these boats.

I am writing to you today as a Lake Fairlee Association Board member, Chair of the Thetford Planning Commission, and a Thetford Selectboard member who is deeply concerned about three primary issues with regard to the operation of wake boats on Lake Fairlee:

1) The Lake Fairlee Association (LFA) was formed to preserve, protect and enhance the distinctive ecology and natural resources of Lake Fairlee and its watershed. Our annual budget is disproportionately weighted toward the mitigation (if not eradication) of invasive water-based plant species such as milfoil and brittle naiad. Needless to say, the potential for the introduction of additional invasive species (for example, zebra mussels) through the discharge of wake boat ballast tanks is an unacceptable risk. Shoreline erosion and the spread of near-surface invasives through wake 'shredding' are additional concerns;

2) The operation of wake boats is a direct and ever present threat to the health and safety of residents and visitors - most prominently summer camp attendees - alike. Swimming and the piloting of small water craft (kayaks, canoes, rowboats etc.) on a water body the size of Lake Fairlee is clearly incompatible with the presence of a large/powerful vessels that create enhanced wake disturbances;

3) As a volunteer for an assortment of civic duties within a small Vermont town like Thetford, I am quite familiar with the virtues of compromise - in given situations where the potential negative consequences of such accommodation(s) do not outweigh the prospective positive outcomes. In this particular case, I envision no 'middle ground' where all parties will be satisfied with the result. Furthermore, I firmly oppose an outcome where the 'tyranny of the minority' - a very small and highly vocal monied faction - advocates for and prioritizes personal recreational pleasure in opposition to pragmatic planning and conscientious stewardship of an invaluable natural resource.

The leadership teams from all lake camps, the select boards of Thetford, Fairlee, and W. Fairlee, and the Lake Fairlee Association want wakesports prohibited on Lake Fairlee. It is infinitely preferable to err on the side of caution arising from considered and dutiful responsibility than to 'throw caution to the winds' in response to the hedonistic and myopic desires of a vocal few....

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
David C. Forbes

Wakesports

I and my family and many friends swim, sail, paddleboard, water ski, kayak, and motor boat around without interfering with each others' sporting activities.

The wakeboats disturb pretty much all of this when they come anywhere near someone enjoying the water in another way.

Some neighbors are reporting disturbance of their shoreline (we have a breakwater).

I have read the research on how these boats also disturb aquatic life, and most of us spending time on this small lake are here to enjoy nature.

Interestingly, I have NEVER seen someone actually surfing on the wake! They are all water skiing behind the boat, even if on a short line on the big wake near the boat.

The ocean is not very far away - if someone wants to surf, they can drive over to the Atlantic and go surfing.

If the substantially larger lakes such as Champlain are okay with wakeboats, then the wakeboaters have somewhere closer to do their sport. Maybe on the larger lakes there is enough distance which reduces the wave action and enough depth to prevent damage to the lake bottom.

Additionally, what used to be a pristine lake, our Joe's Pond, has now been invaded by milfoil. Since we have had boat inspections for years, I can only guess that some wakeboat's ballast tank which cannot be inspected brought the milfoil into our beautiful pond.

I oppose dropping the one/home lake rule, though I think requiring tank cleaning is ALSO a good idea.

I've been going to lake fairlee since my childhood and now bring my children to treasure island. I love how quiet and peaceful it is, and also appreciate how clean the water is and the absence of milfoil and other invasive species. I worry allowing wake sports would disrupt the quiet and could hurt the ecology of the lake as wake sport vehicles can introduce invasive species.

I am a summer resident of Joe's Pond and have been for 76 years. Joe's Pond is too small of a lake for wake sports. The 50 acres that are legal now for wake sports causes a 'washing machine' affect for those camps within the 500 foot distance. All kayak, canoe, swimming activities have to stop due to the waves. I support the proposed new rules of 100 acres, etc proposed by FOVLAP. In August of 2024 the Eurasian Watermilfoil invasive species was found in the lake. I am convinced that a local wake boat (who trailered their boat in between Lake Champlain and Joe's Pond) brought this invasive weed into the pond. I also support the 'home lake' rule. The ANR needs to keep to their mission of keeping Vermont lakes pristine and safe from invasive species. Wake sports is a threat to all lakes. Please adopt the proposed new rules. Joe's Pond is too small of a lake (398 acres) for this sport activity.

As a frequent user of the Waterbury Reservoir, for swimming, camping, paddling, and boating, I have seen how impactful the wake boats are to the people and animals in the water and on shore. The lake is too small for the huge waves they create; I see everyone having to brace themselves when they go by, and have seen several paddlers thrown off their boards. It is dangerous and disrupts the peace that people go to the reservoir to get.

I am in full support of the DEC's proposed wake boating rule changes. We need at least a 100 acre limit on lakes and at least the 500 ft. distance from other users. I have been living near, paddling and swimming on Lake Fairlee for 31 years. I also have worked at the young girls camp as Head of the Canoeing department. On the other side of the Lake I currently work at the Ohana Family camp. These camps send young children, parents, and grandparents out in canoes, sail boats, stand up boards, and kayaks. We like to paddle across the lake to explore a stream on the other side. To do this we need to cross that area currently used by wake boats. Wake boats' dangerous waves affect all of these non-motorized paddlers. When you take children on the lake to teach them how to paddle a canoe it is nerve racking when they get caught in large waves and you are in another canoe and can do nothing to help them. I can't over emphasize the danger of these waves and the terrible lack of respect for the large population of Camper children and families who have been enjoying the quiet waters of Lake Fairlee since the early 1900's. To have their peaceful use of the lake destroyed by a few wake boaters is incomprehensible. We non-motorized paddlers, sailboaters have rights too.

On my own, I swim along the shore and have had my experiences of being caught suddenly in a large wave. I also paddle a small wooden canoe on the lake but will be looking for other lakes to paddle if wake boats continue and increase. It's just too dangerous. I'm not sure they can see me.

Thank you for considering my comments.

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because:

1. Of the surface threats to other vessels, swimmers, and paddlers
2. Near shoreline disruptions and erosion
3. Damage to shoreline structures impacted by these wakes
4. Nutrient release events to the water
5. Deep penetration propeller downwash effects
6. Wave attenuation distances prompting changes to traditional buffer distances
7. The amended rule will conserve the water quality and recreational safety of the Waterbury Reservoir, along with many other lakes similarly situated
8. Wakesports issues are not limited to Vermont – they are nationwide
9. The largest number of users on Vermont's inland lakes are low-impact users, such as, swimmers, kayakers, canoeists, fisher-people, standup paddle boarders, nature photographers, adaptive sports users, water-skiers, motorboat users, etc.
10. When even one wakesporter shows up, many of the normal users simply leave
11. Wildlife is abundant both in our lakes and around them. It is important to keep them safe and to provide them with a habitat that they can flourish in. These lakes are home to loons, eagles, mink, otters, herons, snapping turtles, and many fish species.

I'm a frequent visitor (from Massachusetts) to Fairlee as a family member owns lake front property, so I'm often at the lake. There is no question that wakes from motorboats greatly degrade the ability to enjoy the waterfront. The noise and, in particular, the wakes, are a real problem when canoeing -- making it a challenge to stay stable in the water. I have family members that enjoy swimming in the lake, and seeing large wake boats zooming around cause a lot of stress! Just the noise alone is a problem, but the wakes cause much more damage than that.

It is also quite obvious that wake boats cause faster erosion. It's important Lake Fairlee, the treasure that it is, be protected. This includes the several camp grounds on the lake -- even in the best of circumstances, large wake boats are a safety concern as camp directors work to ensure the safety of their young campers. It would be nice for campers to learn to love the quiet of the lake instead of worrying about overpowered boats zooming around.

I implore the Vermont Department of Conservation to take the important step of prohibiting wake sports on Lake Fairlee by implementing the proposed rule improvements as currently drafted, with no compromises on safety and wake sports. This would be an important step towards, well, conservation.

thank you.

I live on Joes Pond in Cabot VT. I am not in favor of having any wakeboats or high powered boats on the lake. I am one of the few beaches on the lake and the wakes from wake boats are causing damage to my shoreline. They have also dumped me into the water from my paddle board. Pure and simple - not in favor of them on our lake.

Shadow Lake, Glover Vermont

I am most definitely in favor of the new rule. The surface area of Shadow Lake, which is currently less than usual because of issues with the dam, does not provide adequate area for large waves created by wakeboats to dissipate. Foremost, as a recreational lake there are many kayakers, paddle boarders, canoes and small fishing boats that would be adversely affected by the extreme wakes. In addition, the angle of the boat (with the bow high in the air) would increase turbidity, causing a decrease in water clarity.

The Shadow Lake Association, the town of Glover, and the state of Vermont have spent a great deal of money and effort to eradicate Milfoil in Shadow Lake. Allowing boats that take in and discharge water as ballast, pose a risk of Milfoil being introduced to the lake.

Please prohibit wakesports on Lake Fairlee. A family member owns property on the lake and we enjoy using the lake primarily for swimming and kayaking. Large waves are a safety problem for these activities so we need to get off the water when wakeboats are present. Several years ago my parents had the scary experience of being in a boat that was swamped by a wakeboat on Lake Fairlee. This event impacts all our family's use and enjoyment of the lake. Prior to this incident my teenage children commuted via kayak to their summer jobs, traversing the lake in the early morning and evening hours. I would think hard about allowing that now if wakeboats continue to be allowed to operate on the lake, the wakeboats are just too dangerous.

I'd like to thank you for all the work that has been put into making Vermont's wildlife, waters, and those who use the lakes safer from wake sports.

I do believe these boats need more space than currently mandated, not just for their own use, but in order to leave room for the majority who are not participating in wake sports. I also believe the wildlife, especially loons need a greater buffer than is now the norm. More depth (or larger zones restricted to wake boats) for the water critters would be a bonus!

Again, thank you for all the work.

Sincerely,

Laura Winter
Wilmington

I strongly object to wakesports on Lake Fairlee. As is, the lake is a peaceful place to swim and to relax on shore. While wake sports may be fun for those who choose to participate in them, those who do not have no choice but to be disturbed by the noise and water disruption that are part of wakesports. I believe there are also very real safety concerns. I would like to see the board maintain and implement the proposed rule improvements as currently drafted, with no compromises on safety and wakesports. I would like wakesports prohibited for the safety of all lake users, young campers, paddlers, waterskiers, anglers, sailors, etc., and not succumb to pressure from a tiny group of wakesurfers and the boating industry.

Correction to my previous comment. I intended to mark, "I support these proposed changes, but they do not go far enough," rather than, "I support these proposed changes."

Apologies,

Laura Winter
Wilmington VT

The proposed laws are making progress toward safer waters, but wake boats still pose a large threat to invasive species in our lakes. Their large wakes and deep propellers cut weeds and they have spread at an alarming rate in our waters and close to our shores.

I support the proposed changes to further protect our environment and protect the safety of other users by further restricting the use of wake boats on lakes in Vermont. Although I support the changes, I still do not feel they go far enough.

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because these vessels are a threat to other vessels, swimmers, and paddlers as well as being a threat to the environment due to the damage that is evident on the shoreline and by the effects of the downwash created by these vessels.

I have been fortunate to live near lakes my whole life. I have been disturbed by the growth in Wakesports and the behavior of many of the folks who engage in these activities. These vessels are dangerous, especially in light of the fact that the VAST majority of users (especially in Vermont) are low-impact users. We are fortunate to have lakes and reservoirs that are beautiful and provide outstanding habitat for wildlife while offering an opportunity for Vermonters to enjoy the water in a number of ways. Unfortunately, when those engaging in Wakesports arrive, many people leave as it is impossible to enjoy being on the water while these boats are around. Unfortunately, the number of confrontations I have witnessed between low-impact users and those using wakeboats continues to grow. Many of the occasions when this occurs, it is because the distance between wakeboat users and others is not being properly followed. This creates a dangerous situation for other users and, unfortunately, those who participate in Wakesports often do not care. That is, obviously, not always the case but it happens far more frequently than it should.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. I hope that further restrictions on wakesports are considered beyond these proposed changes.

Holland Pond has been a precious sanctuary for humans and animals alike. A rare gem in an ever changing world. The quietude and accessibility to swimmers and unpowered boaters has been a resource to many many people over time...We have enjoyed and protected the nesting loons over the 36 years we have been blessed to own our camp there. The wake boats pose a clear threat to the loons as well as our activities on our canoe, kayak and paddle board on the pond. Please do not allow them on Holland Pond...Thank you, Deb Feiner and Fred Homer

I am a full time Vermont resident, live in Thetford Center and am a local neighbor to Lake Fairlee. I kayak on it every single summer. I also rent out a cabin on the lake, because it is a peaceful and beautiful place to spend summer days and nights. I am strongly against allowing wake boats in a lake of this size, as the waves can unexpectedly overwhelm young people and other lake users near the shore, on the water, paddling, sailing, waterskiing, swimming, fishing and participating in other activities, whether in or outside of the zone.

Please do not compromise the safety of all those who enjoy the lake and its shore for summer activities. Whatever joy a single person gets from wake boarding is significantly offset by the damage it does to the environment, risk it creates for other summer recreators and the changing of the culture of the lake. It risks destroying loon's nest (of which there is one every year on Lake Fairlee, stirring sediment, damanging plants, fish, loons, otters, bringing invasive plants and eroding shore, docks, boats. How can this be a balanced priority when all of the damage that it can and will do?

We live in Vermont for a reason, and want to maintain the cultural and environmental beauty that it has. There are five youth camps on Lake Fairlee. These camps are a defining feature of the lake, with a continuous history dating back to 1906. Together, they serve approximately 1,800 campers and 300 staff each summer, contributing significantly to the local economy through purchases of food, farm products, lodging, and other goods. Their programs emphasize water sports such as swimming, paddling, sailing, waterskiing, and basic waterfront skills for children as young as seven. Lake Fairlee's generally calm waters are central to this mission—and wakesports fundamentally disrupt that safety, especially for vulnerable young campers.

Please do not allow wake boats on Lake Fairlee.

I endorse strongly the proposed rule changes regarding wake boat / wake sport activities on Vermont ponds and lakes. In particular, it is important to apply this rule to Lake Iroquois in Hinesburg. It is small Lake surrounded by houses and camps with docks and with a swimming beach and a boat access ramp. I have used this Lake often through joint access with our Williston residence. When our children were small we swam at the beach often, and I have frequently fished there from my small canoes. The large and powerful waves generated by wake boats travel far beyond the immediate zone of the boat and are a distinct hazard to swimmers, fishermen, kayak or canoe paddlers, and to the docks and property that surround the lake. Wake boats should definitely be prohibited from Lake Iroquois.

My family's connection to Lake Fairlee dates back to the 1920s, when my mother attended Camp Aloha Hive. My parents later built a home on the lake in 1969. I learned to swim, sail, canoe, and waterski on Lake Fairlee and Lake Morey in the 1960s, including as a camper at Camp Lanakila. I have firsthand experience with the long-standing recreational uses of these waters; in fact, my family has enjoyed Lake Fairlee for over 100 years.

My grandchildren visit us every summer and a large part of our fun with them centers on the lake. Since the appearance of wake sports, we have had to become careful and selective in how the children use the lake. For instance, we check to see if a wake boat is on the lake before we permit them to kayak.

I have been a full-time resident of Vermont since 1975. My wife and I founded Crossroad Farm in 1980, ¼ mile from Lake Fairlee since 1980. I care deeply about Vermont's natural resources. We grow vegetables and sell them at our stand at the farm. Many of the residents who live on the lake are our customers. Since the appearance of wake boats and their impact on the lake, we hear from our customers never ending stories of close encounters with the waves generated from the boats. These include swamped kayaks, sunfish, canoes. One young woman, a former gymnast, recounted attempting to balance on her paddle boat with no success. Many customers feel the boats are quite dangerous on such a small lake.

I strongly support the proposed amendments to the Use of Public Waters Rules. If implemented as written, without modification or compromise, they will prohibit wakesports on an additional 12–13 small lakes, including Lake Fairlee.

The proposed changes—specifically the 100-acre minimum wakesports zone size and the 500-foot separation from other users—are necessary to correct a critical omission in the 2024 rule proposal, in which ANR acknowledged that safety was not adequately considered. Safety must be paramount on all small lakes, and especially on Lake Fairlee, which is home to five summer camps. No other lake in Vermont has such a high concentration of young and inexperienced lake users. The existing wakesports zone lies directly offshore of four of these camps. All five camps have used this area for a wide range of watersports for more than a century. The Use of Public Waters Rules require consideration of historic uses of adjacent lands and waters, and on Lake Fairlee, those historic uses are unmistakable.

No new scientific analysis is required to address this safety gap. Research from the Saint Anthony Falls Laboratory demonstrates that wakesports wave energy does not diminish to the level of traditional ski boats until distances exceeding 600 feet. It is wave power—not wave height—that causes paddlers to be knocked from boards, kayaks to be swamped, and shorelines to erode. The proposed 500-foot setback is already a compromise. It should not be weakened further by compromise.

Please move quickly to implement the proposed amendments to protect Lake Fairlee and a dozen other small lakes for this summer's boating season.

Thank you for your work on this critical safety and lake preservation issue.

I have been swimming in Lake Fairlee since 1973. First living on the lake, and since 1978, living 1/2 mile from the lake. A few years back when I was at a beach with my grandchildren, a wave came that was larger than any I had ever seen. I was glad the children were not infants who would have been knocked over. My neighbor told me it was from a wake boat (which I had never heard of) . But the impact was noticeable to me. It was not a motor boat wave lapping against the shore. It was higher and much more forceful.

Since then, whether paddling or swimming, I keep alert for the possibility of a wake boat in my area. In my opinion, Lake Fairlee is too small for wake sport activity. I'll let the environmental scientists address the other issues. Thank you for your time.

I am writing to express my support for abolishing or greatly curbing the use of, wake boats on all lakes and ponds in Vermont. I am especially concerned regarding the Waterbury reservoir. I live close by and visit often in the summer months. Already this relatively small body of water is very crowded with kids, dogs, long distance swimmers, fisherman, water skiers, day boating, canoeists and kayakers, etc.. Wake boats not only greatly disturb this enjoyment, but add in element of extreme danger. Also, wake boats are known to wreak havoc on the aquatic environment. Shoreline vegetation, Fish, aquatic plants, water, quality, erosion, birds, etc. are all negatively affected.

I strongly urge that this form of the use of our public waterways is not allowed due to the fact that it is a nuisance, is very dangerous, and harms the environment. Thank you.

I am writing in strong and passionate support of ANR's proposed revisions to Vermont's wake sports rules. Over the course of decades I have experienced the calm beauty of the Green Mountain State's "quiet waters." The solace has been a much needed antidote to the business of life away from hustle and bustle of life. The lack of motorized craft that make wakes has been such a draw to me and my family. Sadly, there are increasingly few "quiet waters" for the public to enjoy. On the other hand, there are many lakes offer opportunities for those seeking wake experiences. Wakeless waters are also needed in support of the wildlife that so many Vermont residents and visitors appreciate. I truly hope that this campaign to protect and preserve the rare tranquility of wakeless lakes and ponds.

I am the President of the Board of The Lochearn Foundation, Inc which operates Camp Lochearn. Camp Lochearn was founded in 1916 and has been in continuous operation on the lake for 110 years.

Camp Lochearn is located on Lake Fairlee, a lake that serves as home to five summer camps, most of which have operated on Lake Fairlee for over 100 years. The lake is used daily by many hundreds of children at these camps throughout the summer months, many of whom are as young as seven years old and regularly participate in activities such as canoeing, kayaking, sailing, swimming, and paddleboarding.

Wake boats and wake-enhanced sports are fundamentally incompatible with this environment. These vessels are designed to create large, powerful wakes that significantly disrupt calm water conditions and introduce serious safety risks for small craft and young, inexperienced paddlers. The resulting waves reduce visibility, limit safe access to the shoreline, and create unpredictable conditions that are dangerous for children and staff alike.

For more than a century, Lake Fairlee has functioned as a shared, multi-use lake where quiet recreation, environmental stewardship, and child safety have been paramount. Allowing wake boats would undermine this long-standing balance and place campers, counselors, and other lake users at unnecessary risk. The presence of multiple camps on the lake makes Lake Fairlee uniquely sensitive to this issue, as its primary summer use includes supervised youth programming and instructional water activities.

For these reasons, we strongly support a ban on wake boats on Lake Fairlee. Such a regulation would protect children, preserve the traditional character of the lake, and ensure that it remains a safe and appropriate environment for all who rely on it—especially the youngest and most vulnerable users.

Ron Scott - Camp Lochearn

To: Department of Environmental Conservation

From: Eugenia and William Braasch

Date: February 1, 2026

Re: Use of Public Waters Rules - Wakeboats

Our family has been a property owner on Lake Fairlee for about 50 years.

My mother is a full time resident; we live in a town nearby, visiting family and Lake Fairlee year-round. We are grandparents with preschoolers who are beginning to learn to swim, fish, and use non-motorized boats.

Last summer, speeding motor boats with large wakes disrupted our family's lake activities, frightening us with the ensuing waves.

That experience left a lasting impression on our grandchildren, who became nervous being in the water. Instead of being relaxed and gaining water skills, the children are now on the look-out for wake boats and cautious about using the Lake.

While we are concerned about our family's safety and well-being, we also recognize the impacts of wake boats on many other youngsters who come to the Lake as campers to experience various Lake-related activities.

We urge you, please, do not adopt any compromise rules which might jeopardize public safety (human as well as other wildlife), the quality of lake water, shoreline, bottom, and disrupt the continued environmental stewardship - for over a century - of Lake Fairlee.

We likewise urge you to protect all Vermont lakes through your decision regarding the long term stewardship of our precious shared resource: no wake boat use in its public waters.

We support DEC's proposal and it should be strengthened by adopting the RWVL rule changes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Wake sport boats offer a huge danger to Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes. We work hard to keep the water clear and free of invasive species, but the wake boats cannot guarantee that their water tanks do not contain snails and other invasive species. Once these snails get it, there is no getting rid of them.

Since the snails are in Lake Memphemagog and other area lakes, boats, particularly Canadian boats, that are transferred from those to Lake Willoughby have a very big chance of infesting the lake.

It seems like a no brainer to me that when you balance the pros and cons, the pros win out big time. People enjoy the lake for swimming, fishing, and all manner of boating. Why endanger that? There is only one benefit of allowing wake boats and that is to please the wake boat industry and their very few followers.

Clearly the wake boat industry cares more about profits than clear water. The water ways of Vermont are millions of years old. WE MUST HONOR AND RESPECT THAT LEGACY.

I am imploring DEC to implement the proposed rule improvements as currently drafted, with no compromises on safety and wakesports. Please make it clear you would like wakesports prohibited for the safety of all lake users, young campers, paddlers, waterskiers, anglers, sailors, and not succumb to pressure from a tiny group of wakesurfers and the boating industry. I swim at Lake Fairly and I am terrified of the wake boats. As someone who has been injured by a motor vehicle because of an unsafe condition, a wake boat brings every PTSD moment back into my psyche. This has been a place I have always enjoyed swimming safely. PLEASE change the rulings to make this lake, that has residents, that has a multiple of children from the surrounding camps a much safer place to share. Let me be clear, I support the proposed rule changes with no compromises, but I would like to see the rules even more protective. We need statewide safety improvements, including 1. increasing the minimum wakesports zone size from 50 to 100 acres and 2. increasing the distance between wake boats in surf mode and users from 200 to 500 feet.

PLEASE adopt these changes to the ruling especially for our smaller lakes. Thank you.

I am a part owner of a family cabin on Anna Dodge La. We have owned this property since 1985. As long time users of the lake we have concerns of safety when using boats like a kayak as a wake boat goes by in surf mode. Erosion is another concern of ours with these boats. Please implement the proposed rule improvements as currently drafted with no compromises on safety and wakesports. Wakesports should be prohibited for the safety of all lake users, boaters, anglers, young campers, skiers, paddlers, sailors, and everyone else who uses the lake.

No they shouldn't have wake sports on lake fairlee it isn't a big enough lake they don't allow personal water craft they both cause erosion to the banks of the lake

Hello,

My family is a property owner on Lake Fairlee and my grandmother is a full time Fairlee resident. I learned to swim in Lake Fairlee and worked for four summers as a camp counselor at the Aloha camps on the lake.

As a swimmer, canoer, and kayaker who visits the lake regularly every summer, wake boats often disrupt an otherwise tranquil experience. For the safety of all lake users, I believe wakesports should be prohibited in Lake Fairlee.

Wakeboats regularly disrupt swimmers, kayakers, and paddle boarders on the lake. Often I have been hesitant to swim a desired route because of fear that a wakeboat would not see me. As a lifeguard at the Aloha Hive summer camp, we would go to great lengths to protect our campers when they went on long swims. Beyond the fear of physical harm, the psychological impact of being swamped or hit with big waves when learning to swim was a scary experience for numerous campers I worked with, many of whom had not been in a non-pool body of water before. Wakeboats added a level of anxiety to the process that feels antithetical to what learning to swim in a calm lake should be.

Beyond the big waves and risk of being swamped, wakeboats disrupt the local wildlife that is an essential part of the lake. The lake is a wonderful place to see loons, eagles, herons, and more (as a kid from the suburbs, the lake was the first place I saw all those birds!) and the loud noise and choppy waters caused by wakesports negatively affect the chances of lake goers to enjoy that wildlife. As lovers of Lake Fairlee, we all know how easily sound can travel across the water. The big waves and big sounds have a big impact on all enjoyers of Lake Fairlee, and I hope that the value of a serene and safe experience can be prioritized over all that noise.

I am writing in support of the Department of Environmental Conservation's amended Use of Public Water Rule regarding managing wakesports in Vermont. The amendments will promote safety, maintain water quality; and slow/stop the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Yes it's true. Wakeboats do all those things.

They are unsafe, particularly for canoes/kayaks because of their big waves. And for swimmers it could be deadly.

They are bad for water quality. They churn up sediment from lake bottoms. They damage property like my dock and riparian lakefront plants, and cause erosion.

They are bad for invasive species, especially if they are used on multiple waterways.

We have a house on Lake Raponda, which is protected, and we need to protect other waterways. This is just common sense to toughen regulation of wakesports. I've nearly been knocked out of my kayak, and our property has been damaged.

I'm submitting this letter to express my support for the Department of Environmental Conservation's revised Use of Public Water Rule concerning wakesports regulation in Vermont. These updated regulations will enhance safety measures, preserve water quality, and prevent or reduce the proliferation of invasive aquatic species. Wakeboats create genuine hazards in these ways. Their large wakes pose serious safety risks, especially to paddlers in canoes and kayaks. For people swimming, these waves could prove fatal. Their impact on water quality is significant. These vessels disturb bottom sediments, harm shoreline vegetation and structures including docks, and accelerate erosion along the water's edge. They contribute to the spread of invasive species, particularly when operators move between different bodies of water. As someone who has grown up visiting my family and living on Lake Raponda, I've witnessed firsthand why this lake has protective status. Other Vermont waterways deserve similar safeguards. Strengthening wakesports oversight is simply prudent policy. I've personally experienced close calls while kayaking, and my parents' property has sustained damage from these activities.

My name is Jake Caster and I am a professional wake surfer. These limitations should absolutely not be put in place. I have spent half my life on the water. Wakeboats are harmless. Jetskis and speedboats actually create a faster velocity wave which causes more damage to shorelines. Wakesurfing has changed my life and has been my full-time job for 10 years. Taking this away from people is not the way this should be handled.

After seeing the the bad impact that jet skis had on Lake Willoughby years ago it became clear that very few people were obeying the rules, so in general I oppose wake boats on Willoughby for the same reason. However, if the wake boats are being allowed, I support increasing the minimum buffer zone.

Holland Pond is a small, tranquil body of water cherished as a peaceful retreat and place of natural beauty. During the many summers I've spent at my in-laws' cabin, the pond's simple pleasures such as swimming, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, paddle boarding, birdwatching, and fishing, define its character. A pair of nesting loons returns each year, often with new chicks in tow, embodying the quiet magic that makes Holland Pond so special. Introducing wake sports would fundamentally disrupt this delicate environment. The large wakes generated by these activities would endanger swimmers and small craft users, erode the shoreline, and threaten the nesting loons that depend on calm, undisturbed waters. Wake sports are best suited for larger, deeper lakes designed to safely accommodate high-speed recreation. Holland Pond, with its small size and limited development, should remain a place where visitors can experience the peace and wilderness that define its charm. Please help preserve the quiet beauty and ecological balance that make Holland Pond a rare treasure.

I am writing in support of the Department of Environmental Conservation's amended Use of Public Water Rule regarding managing wakesports in Vermont. The amendments will promote safety, maintain water quality; and slow/stop the spread of aquatic invasive species.

The big waves effect the safety of the swimmers kayakers paddle board etc.

They are bad for water quality. The sediment from the bottom of the lake gets stirred up which causes a lot of other issues.

They are bad for invasive species, especially if they are used on multiple waterways.

We have a house on Lake Raponda, which is protected, and we need to protect other waterways. This is just common sense to toughen regulation of wakesports.

We want the lake to be able to be enjoyed by all ages and for many generations to come.

I would like to express my support for the proposed rule, and am excited that the DEC is taking steps to make our waterways safer and healthier! Wake boats on small bodies of water have never made sense. They pose a safety risk on small lakes and ponds given the lack of space and inherent difficulty in navigating those types of boats (high front ends, obvious focal point BEHIND the boat), and for the users small lakes and ponds are inadequate to really have fun out there! You need more space to be able to get into the flow of wakeboarding, in my opinion. Furthermore, the wake caused by these particular boats is much too large for the hydrology of small lakes and ponds. The excessive waves cause tremendous erosion, which increased sediment in lakes and contributes to lots of other problems including algal blooms and nutrient overloads. Lastly, the transport of these boats from one lake to another causes a management headache for invasive species, especially due to the ballast water. If the DEC is going to attempt to manage invasive species, it makes no sense to not also address the spreading of these species via wakeboats. Thank you for making this new rule, and good luck with the process!

Dear Agency of Natural Resources,

My family has owned a house on Lake Bomoseen for over forty years, and I'm the third generation to grow up spending summers on this lake. I've been going there since I was born in 2012, and my ten year old brother has too.

My family doesn't just surf on the lake, we also fish, swim, jet ski, kayak and just ride the boat. My grandfather got the boat about five years ago and I started surfing two years ago. Surfing has been something I've grown to love and enjoy, and it's a way for me to bond with my family, namely my mom and grandfather. It's been challenging but also a big accomplishment for me. I always look forward to going to Vermont in the summers and trying out new skills when I surf. It also helps my mental health. It lets me get away from all of my troubles and worries and just lets me be in the moment and be happy.

I'm writing to oppose the proposed changes to the wake boat laws. One specific issue that I don't agree with is the 500 foot radius for wake boats. It's impossible to enforce because people already don't follow the 200 foot radius. I was up surfing many times and a boat pulling a tube or a jet ski has followed and come much closer than 200 feet. Since I am a decent surfer, I was able to stay up until the boat passed, but it would've caused a lot of fear if I wasn't and fell. Having a different rule for a specific boat causes confusion and I think it would be better if we had one single rule for all boat types.

There is also the concern for boats carrying invasive species. This is a very important issue to address, but wake boats aren't the only water craft that can transport invasive species into the lake. From what I know, most wake boat owners don't transport their boats from lake to lake. They also clean them very well and take good care of them. I also know that fishing boats and jet skis can get transported and are transported from lake to lake very easily. The majority of boats that I see at the boat launch coming in and out of the lake are fishing boats and jet skis. While invasive species are definitely a big issue that needs to be addressed, I don't think it's right to put the blame on only wake boats because restricting one type of water craft will not solve this issue.

I oppose the proposed changes and ask that you keep the wake sport regulations that were put in place in 2024.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hayden Lutz

Lake Bomoseen

I believe it is important to protect our small lakes and ponds from large wake producing boats. Wildlife, swimmers, boaters and the lake itself all benefit from calm waters.

VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Program,

I am writing to express strong opposition to the proposed amendments to wake sports regulations within Vermont's Use of Public Waters. These changes would unnecessarily restrict an activity that has long been enjoyed safely and responsibly by Vermont families, youth, and visitors.

It is important to recognize that Vermont's current wake sport rules were developed by qualified professionals through a rigorous, data-driven process. These regulations are already among the strictest in the nation. To undermine that expertise by rewriting rules based on zero evidence of safety issues, zero documented infractions, and zero proof that the existing framework is inadequate is unjustifiable. Policy should be guided by facts and professional judgment, not by perception or pressure from uninformed voices.

Wake sports also provide meaningful community benefits. Organizations such as Wake the World offer transformative experiences for children facing hardship, trauma, or instability. Through volunteer-led watersports events, these kids are given rare opportunities to build confidence, feel supported, and experience joy in a safe environment. Restricting such access in Vermont would directly diminish the ability of groups like this to serve vulnerable children and families who rely on these programs. Additionally, the integrity of the public comment process has been compromised. This forum, intended to reflect the voices of Vermonters, has been flooded by individuals who may not be residents, not property owners, and live hundreds or thousands of miles away. These commenters have no connection to Vermont's lakes or communities and are using this vulnerable platform to advance broad anti-boating agendas that do not reflect Vermont's needs or realities.

Vermont's regulations should be shaped by evidence, by local experience, and by the people who live and recreate here. The proposed changes fail that standard.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Department to reject the proposed rule revisions and maintain the current, professionally developed regulations that already ensure safety, fairness, and responsible access to our public waters.

Thank you for your consideration.

Grant Smith

Westmore Vermont

This has been a place I have always enjoyed swimming safely. PLEASE change the rulings to make this lake, that has residents, that has a multiple of children from the surrounding camps a much safer place to share. Let me be clear, I support the proposed rule changes with no compromises, but I would like to see the rules even more protective. We need statewide safety improvements, including 1. increasing the minimum wakesports zone size from 50 to 100 acres and 2. increasing the distance between wake boats in surf mode and users from 200 to 500 feet.

PLEASE adopt these changes to the ruling especially for our smaller lakes. Thank you.

Allowing wakeboarding on the Waterbury Reservoir is an unfair and inefficient way to share public spaces. For every smiling wakeboarder there are twenty upset kayakers, anglers, and paddle boarders.

I heartily support the effort to strengthen the regulation of wakesports on Vermont's inland lakes. The idea of "public waters" means that we should all be able to share WHILE NOT adversely affecting others. Any activity that does adversely affect others--and by others, I include wildlife as well as people--should be closely scrutinized and regulated. Noise pollution, water and air pollution, and excess waves are all the products of an activity that benefits few at a cost to many. As a result of the above issues, my use of public waters has been reduced through the years, which means the state receives less revenue. I can only imagine this is a common experience.

I agree to the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules, which would prohibit wakesports on the Waterbury Reservoir, even though the changes do not go far enough. Wakes disrupt the natural habitat for indigenous fauna, they disrupt the peaceful enjoyment of the reservoir for other non-wake sport users, and they erode shoreline.

We have two on our lake on our shallow side or point of Lake Fairlee, I know we are only two miles long, It's 50 feet at the deepest right straight out from us, but at the widest point to be able to pass other boat, they would or should be right down the middle. We had one outsider wake boat last year, but not on my shift, they came close enough to put water into the back of a fishing boat, the person then had to bail water, in order it get back in. I am a Greeter at the lake, we don't allow Jet sky's for the same reason of erosion of shore banks, this boat if too close to land would also cause erosion of our banks, it's too much power for our lake. We are too small, please stop these powerful boats from being on our lake. I support these proposed changes, but they do not go far enough.

I strongly support the proposed changes designed to strengthen VT's regulation of Wake Sports.

I love VT's natural resources, and encourage the DEC to enact all components of the proposed changes that will protect wildlife, our natural resources, and the general public interest to enjoy our natural resources with minimal impact.

Therefore, I support:

The proposed increase of minimum wake sports safety zone from 50 to 100 acres.

A required minimum wake sports run of 3,000 feet.

Expanding the safety buffer from other users and structures from the current 200 feet to 500 feet.

Eliminating the Home Lake Rule and replacing it with required hot-water ballast tank decontamination for wake boats traveling between lakes, and for boats entering VT from other states.

Sincerely,
Melinda Petter

I support the proposed changes to wakesport boat rules. We live and boat on Harriman reservoir. There are a lot of out of state boats that use our ramp right at beginning of our road. We live on Brickhouse Road in Whitingham VT. I am also concerned regarding the fish beds that are disturbed by the use of these boats. The wakes created are damaging, as you know. Our lake has skinnier areas and wider areas and the boats do not stop when they are in a skinnier area of the lake. Thank you for considering my comments.

to whom it may concern, (that is ALL of us) I strongly urge you to restrict the use of _____ on our small lakes. they are not only a danger to individuals and families out in the water swimming and in small crafts., they are profoundly disruptive to the loons and many other wild creatures that share our precious waterways. Our family has enjoyed time on the lake for decades ,going there to find peace and enjoyment interacting with nature, this is a precious gift that needs to be preserved.

My name is Lynda Hayes; I'm a greeter for the Lake Fairlee Association. I know that we have 2 Wake boats on our lake. We have several camps on Lake Fairlee a couple of the largest are on the shore parallel to the designated Wake sports zone. These camps have young boaters with minimal experience in kayaking, canoes, rowboats and sailboats. We also have paddleboards that use our Lake. The wake boats create waves big enough to capsize these boats/boards. I also have heard of an instance on our Lake that happened on someone else's shift where a wake boat came close enough to another boater to put water in their boat and they had to bail the water to get back in. I am also concerned about the effects of erosion to the shoreline, which is why we do not allow Jetski's on the lake. I also worry about the effects of erosion of the shore to the wildlife that live here as well. I am concerned about the power that these boats have on a lake that is not big enough to support them. Our lake is not big enough to support these boats, please stop these boats from being on our lake. I support these proposed changes, but they do not go far enough.

My family and I live just a few miles from the Waterbury Reservoir and we are very fortunately to enjoy that body of water in all seasons for boating, swimming (short and long-distance), kayaking, skiing, and skating.

We love the reservoir because all those activities are possible, and none of them impede any of the others as long as people are respectful. We also love to see the local wildlife, including loons, beaver, turtles and other animals.

The one activity that does NOT fit on this body of water is wake boating and wake surfing. Those boats produce large waves that make it dangerous for nearby swimmers, and are high enough to tip over less-experienced stand-up paddle boarders, kayakers, and canoeists. The waves also erode the shorelines and affect nearby wildlife.

With the noise and the waves, wake boating is one of those activities where a couple of people on the boat are having fun, but the pleasure and the quality of the natural experience is significantly diminished for the dozens or hundreds of people within sight and earshot. I know that when a wake boat arrives in the area, we usually leave.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, I ask that you DO NOT allow wake boats on the Waterbury Reservoir or any other comparable bodies of water in Vermont.

The Westmore community has been working diligently to keep our lake waters clean and free of invasive plants. Wake boats provide an unwanted host to these plants as it seems almost impossible for them not to bring contaminants from lake to lake. These boats not only disrupt the tranquil nature of our lake but most importantly they threaten unalterable harm through these contaminants. I understand that wake boats will not be eliminated but I respectfully request that the Home Rule be maintained. Under this rule neighbors can encourage neighbors to be respectful and responsible for their boating use. The chance of transporting invasive plants is greatly diminished if the boat remains on one lake. Lakeside communities face two significant battles: one fighting to keep their lake waters clean and another to prohibit the use of wake boats. Please give us a fighting chance to at least keep our waters clean by maintaining the Home Rule.

I support strengthening wakeboat policies that will ensure complete decontamination between lakes, better protect shorelines, lake ecology and wildlife, and better protect quality of life for lakeshore residents, swimmers and boaters. These things are loud, environmentally destructive, and dangerous to humans, animals, and non-mammalian life. Given the amount of pleasure they provide (to a very few people) vs risks to health and safety, they should be banned completely from VT lakes and freshwater.

The proposed changes include the following:

Update the language on how to delegate to municipalities, review and submit petitions, and inspect and decontaminate (or clean) watercraft,

Increase safety offsets between wakesports and other recreational users,

Revise the wakesports zone definition, and

Require hot water decontamination for wakeboats moving between water bodies.

Wakeboats should operate further than 1000 feet from shore, in water at least 20 feet deep, in an area of 60 or more contiguous acres. These parameters are supported by scientific research and by the reality of life on Vermont lakes where wakeboats have already appeared.

Lowering the distance to 500 feet makes no sense based on the evidence and neither does catering to boats that make swimming and non-motorized boating traumatic. Just as on roads we give precedence to pedestrians over bikes over cars then we should also protect the simplest modes first. This new rule does not go far enough.

I am most worried about the ecological impacts of the waves on the shoreline and the organisms that live there.

I. Support The Proposal But More Needs To Be Done With Updated And Upgrade Technology Advanced Services Within infrastructure

Please make rules regarding our fresh water lakes and boats bringing in contaminated flora. I lived on Lake St Catherine and know the damaging effects of milfoil and how many people worked diligently to clean the lake up! Boaters need to decontaminate their watercraft before and after launching.

I support strengthening of the UPW rule. I believe all restrictions on fuel consuming pleasure activities is needed in face of global warming and the continued degradation of our natural environment by humans.

I support the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed amendments to the Use of Public Water (UPW) Wakesports Rule adopted in 2024. Wake boats are not compatible with other recreational uses of Vermont's lakes and create too much risk of invasive contamination. We need to protect our lakes and ponds for other forms of recreation.

We have owned a camp on Joe's Pond for 37 years. The impact of wake sports on the lake is substantial on both the shore front and other boaters. Our family is opposed to wake sports on Joe's Pond and wholeheartedly support the proposed rules further limiting the sport and eliminating this disruptive use from Joe's Pond. Thank you for the opportunity to comment

Pease implement the proposed rule improvements as currently drafted, with no compromises on safety and wakesports. My family would like wakesports prohibited for the safety of all lake users, young campers, paddlers, waterskiers, anglers, sailors, etc., and hope you will not succumb to pressure from a tiny group of wakesurfers and the boating industry. They are ruining the lake experience for the rest of us. We live near Lake Fairly and have friends lining on the lake but we avoid going there when the wakesports are going on because it isn't safe, it's very loud and close to the shore.

I support the strengthening of rules on wake boats' use of public waters, particularly the separation of wake boats from paddlers and swimmers. I have been swamped by waves generated by regular powerboats going too fast while canoeing on Waterbury Reservoir, and waves produced by wake boats are even larger. In truth, I am opposed to the use of wake boats on most waterbodies in Vermont, except perhaps for the largest lakes such as Lake Champlain. In addition to posing safety risks and destroying the experience of paddlers, they cause shoreline erosion and the siltation of lakes, as regular powerboats do. This is visible on the Waterbury Reservoir.

As a Vermonter who loves to kayak on quiet water, often with my young children or friends who have little kayaking experience, I would like to express my support for a strong wakeboat rule that will increase safety offsets between wakesports and other recreational users. These common sense parameters are supported by scientific research and by the experiences of non-wakeboat recreationists on Vermont lakes where wakeboats have already appeared. Increasing offsets provides space for human-powered recreation in peaceful conditions, so that we can share Vermont waters safely and fairly. Our state's way of life and outdoor tourism economy are highly dependent on this type of sharing, and our values demand respect for science, for wildlife, for inclusion and safety of young children and paddling novices, and for experiencing nature in a quiet soundscape.

Wakesports belong in dedicated facilities that do not have an effect on our naturally occurring waterways. This is a solution seen in other parts of the US and has no effect on the natural water cycle. I support the amendment changes to the Vermont use of Public Waters rule. Please protect our lakes from degradation.

I support the strengthening of the UPW rule to further protect our waterways, shorelines, wildlife and those who use non-motor craft.

I am writing in support of The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation amendments to the Use of Public Water (UPW) Wakesports Rule adopted in 2024 to include the following:

Update the language on how to delegate to municipalities, review and submit petitions, and inspect and decontaminate (or clean) watercraft,

Increase safety offsets between wakesports and other recreational users,

Revise the wakesports zone definition, and

Require hot water decontamination for wakeboats moving between water bodies.

These amendments are essential to provided essential protections against the environmental damage, water degradation, public safety hazards, and harm to wildlife that can result from wake boats on lakes that are ill-suited for them.

I support the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed amendments to the Use of Public Water (UPW) Wakesports Rule adopted in 2024.

Fast wake boats can be dangerous and harm wildlife.

I enjoy canoeing and small craft sailing. How am I expected to navigate a lake when a wake boat is present? Must I circumnavigate the perimeter of a lake within the off-shore lane in which the wake boats are prohibited, thus substantially extending the distance I must travel to reach the opposite shore? ... rather than cross mid-lake as might be desirable, but where the wake may cause substantial risk or in some way compromise my safety.

I am not in support of the proposed rule changes. Wake boats are being singled out unfairly and the new rule is proposed without proof of problems with the current rules which have only been in effect for one boating season. During that time no problems have been documented. The rule change risks creating significant confusion between boat operators due to the limitations proposed on wake boats and which don't apply to all other boats. In my experience wake boat operators are some of the best educated (on boat operation) and most conscientious boat drivers. As stated in the meetings, wake boats represent a very small risk of cross contamination between water bodies because these boats generally stay on one lake. Fishing boats and other boats present a much higher risk. In summary, there is no reason that the rules that went into effect summer of 2025 need to be amended to be more restrictive. I am not in support of the change.

As someone who has lived and enjoyed paddling in Vermont (canoes and kayaks) since 1989, I agree with the following amendments to the Use of Public Water (UPW) Wakesports Rule to increase safety for other recreational users, and to provide even greater protections for preventing the spread of aquatic invasives between bodies of water:

"Update the language on how to delegate to municipalities, review and submit petitions, and inspect and decontaminate (or clean) watercraft,

Increase safety offsets between wakesports and other recreational users,

Revise the wakesports zone definition, and

Require hot water decontamination for wakeboats moving between water bodies."

We should be focused on increased vigilance, research and monitoring of water quality in lakes and ponds as there seem to be more issues in recent years, such as increased algae blooms, possibly also due to climate change. Stricter wakesports rules in public waters would support a commitment to healthier water quality, such as through decreased erosion. Healthy water bodies are part of overall healthy ecosystems for wildlife, and current and future generations of Vermonters, and for our ongoing, strong tourism economy. There are enough larger lakes within reasonable driving distances for wakesports. We need other areas, like Groton State Forest, to be places of refuge and respite, especially in these times of increased stress and health challenges, and thus I strongly support the original petition from the RWVL calling for wakeboats to operate no closer than 1000 feet from shore, in water at least 20 feet deep, in an area of 60 or more contiguous acres that meets these conditions.

I support strengthening the wakeboard limits for all the permitted lakes. I believe there is irrevocable damage to wildlife and lake ecology as well as making it difficult for all non-motorized boating activities.

This whole process is utterly confusing. Here's my input: I think wakeboats should be severely restricted in the speeds they can go and the size of the lakes where they are allowed. I don't know the recommended speeds for preserving the shorelines, but they should be the slowest possible. I don't know the size of lakes where they are allowed. I think they should NOT be allowed on small lakes, only large ones, whatever that size is legally determined to be. Let them go on Lake Champlain, but not Spring Lake in Shrewsbury. I am not interested in "protecting" the "rights" of people to use VT bodies of water however they want. Our bodies of water and their shorelines should remain as pristine as possible, regardless of vacationers' wishes, whether or not they are VT residents. Their dollars into VT coffers are worth nothing if they destroy our waters and their shorelines.

I don't know what these proposed changes are. I can't figure it out from this email.

Thank you, Ann Vanneman, Wallingford, VT

I support any rules that will limit the operation of wakeboats for wakesports in VT waters. I am sick of giving away VT to vacationers, especially rich second homeowners, who think they can do what they want to our beautiful waters. Their dollars in VT's economy are not worth it if they are used to denigrate our lakes. I wish there were zero wakeboats allowed.

I don't know what the "proposed changes" are - it's not clear from this email, but I am opposed to any rules that let wakeboats have any more freedoms than they've had.

I support strengthening of the UPW law to protect aquatic creatures whose habitat is disrupted by large wake. Also, as a canoeist, paddleboarder and kayaker, I'd like water safety to be enhanced by these measures.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has proposed amendments to the Use of Public Water (UPW) Wakesports Rule adopted in 2024. The proposed changes include the following:

- Update the language on how to delegate to municipalities, review and submit petitions, and inspect and decontaminate (or clean) watercraft
- Increase safety offsets between wakesports and other recreational users,
- Revise the wakesports zone definition
- Require hot water decontamination for wakeboats moving between water bodies.

I stand with VPIRG in supporting these amendments which aim to further prevent harm by large wake boats on Vermont lakes or areas within lakes that are too small or shallow to support them. Anything we can do to further limit environmental damage, water degradation, public safety hazards, and harm to wildlife attributable to wake boats on water bodies that are ill-suited for them should be put into place.

Thank you for your attention in this matter to help keep Vermont beautiful, healthy, and enjoyable.

I support restricting wake boat use to protect our lakes.

Dear VT ANR / DEC: I strenuously support a revision of the current wake boating rules to reflect reality and common sense, as follows: wake boating should occur ONLY >1000 feet from shore, in water at least 20 feet deep, in an area of 60 or more contiguous acres. These parameters are supported by scientific research. Furthermore, I feel strongly that heretofore, the discussions around this issue have ignored the fact that any less stringent wake boating rules are effectively capitulating to a noisy minority of actual wake boating persons. That such a small minority should overcome the valid concerns of a huge majority of citizens who use our public waterways carefully is an example of how those who have little concern for our responsibility to preserve and protect our natural environment. Finally, no matter what the rules governing wake boating end up being, I have grave concerns regarding the ability of law enforcement to monitor and enforce those rules. Wake boaters who take their craft from one lake to another are not necessarily going to abide by the requirement to clean their craft of possible invasive entities. I seriously doubt that all manner of Vermont's law enforcement authorities can actively monitor and enforce wake boating rules. My opinion is that wake boating should be banned altogether. Short of that, I insist that the above-described rules be adopted immediately. Thank you. Sincerely, Gene White Jr & Gail Cummings, Essex Jct, VT

I am a property owner on the lake. I would like to see more restrictive rules for wake boating. I do not feel safe as a swimmer or non-motorized boat user on the lake with wake boats. In addition, the erosion to shoreline is another major concern and is damaging my property. I support the proposed rule changes increasing the minimum wakesports zone (WSZ) size on Vermont's lakes from 50 to 100 acres - no compromises. Thank you.

I am dismayed that wakesports would be considered acceptable on Lake Fairlee. There should not be any compromises permitting their use on this lake. Many people using the lake are vulnerable safety-wise, especially with the many camps we have on the lake. These are young people learning to swim and sail and are without the skills necessary to handle the dangerous wakes from these boats.

I am a full time resident of Vermont, having lived in Thetford for 40 years. We've spent many hours in and on the lake. Our children learned to swim there, including the challenge of swimming across the lake. Imagine a young swimmer encountering the wake from a wake boat! Or the person rowing a simple rowboat next to them to accompany them safely across the lake.

Please, for the safety of everyone using this lake, **DO NOT ALLOW ANY WAKE SPORTS ON LAKE FAIRLEE!** (Or any of the smaller lakes being considered for compromise.)

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

I am a property owner on the lake. I would like to see more restrictive rules for wake boating. They represent one group of people taking enjoyment from an activity that damages everyone else. I do not feel safe as a swimmer or non-motorized boat user on the lake with wake boats. In addition, the erosion to shoreline is another major concern and is damaging my property. I can see where the soil is gradually being eroded, behind the root system that is supposed to hold the soil in place. The erosion is accelerating and we can witness the larger waves washing out the soil behind the roots. I support the proposed rule changes increasing the minimum wakesports zone (WSZ) size on Vermont's lakes from 50 to 100 acres - we should not compromise and reduce that amount as it is barely sufficient. Thank you.

As both a wake sports athlete and a certified Paddling Instructor, I fully support the proposed changes. Large wakes are highly detrimental to the other users of the lake. Not only do they effect the safety in a negative manner the large wakes are eroding the shorelines and hillsides. Wake Surfing is fun. The activity just needs to be done in bodies of water which support the aggressive wakes generated by the activity. Thank you.

The beautiful lakes of Glover and West Glover have been maintained by many volunteers and is overseen by the lake associations spending countless hours keeping the lake safe and clean. They are passionate about that task because of the love they have for their lake. We believe we need to protect our lakes for the benefits of summer and winter tourism. We need to protect our lakes for those who choose to fish, swim and kayak during their time at the lake. Visitors that come to our towns bring significant economic benefits and allowing the wake boats could be detrimental to that benefit. Wake boats in surf mode create downward prop wash, disrupting sediments and uprooting vegetation up to 20 feet deep, and harming fish habitats. Help the towns of Glover and West Glover keep our lakes healthy for years to come.

My wife and I enjoy cruising and fishing in our small boat (15.5'). In the past few years wake boats have increased in numbers creating dangerous waves tat toss small boats around endangering people. The environmental impact has been identified and proven. One wake boat negatively impacts every other boat it passes, they are obnoxious and I am talking about wake boats that try to be conscientious, not to mention careless ones.

Wake boats are fun for the few but horrible for the majority and the environment. They do no belong on most Vermont lakes.

I agree with the changes will reduce the number of Vermont's inland lakes that can allow wakesports, from 30 to 18. I think this is a measured change that will only impact those extreme wakes some people push to have.

I find that wake boats are unsafe for small paddle craft and contribute to shoreline erosion which contributes to poor water quality.

Waterbury is so lucky to have a natural resource like the Reservoir. I am an avid user, from open water swimming, to paddleboarding, to floating in an inner tube with my friends after a long day. There have been days where I have felt truly unsafe on the water due to the number of motor boats out. The wakesport course being so close to the boat launch makes the journey to and from the launch site unsafe. I am often out there with just my open water buoy and still feel unsafe at times. While I recognize the density of boat usage is a separate problem, removing the wake sport course would be a first step towards making the Reservoir safer for everyone.

I support the DEC in strengthening protections for wildlife, habitat, and the public from the unintended consequences of wakeboarding. As a Williston resident and user of Lake Iroquois for recreation and wildlife observation, I support these new rules as a step in the right direction. While all forms of recreation deserve thorough consideration, wake sports have an outsized impact, one that is not suitable for most VT lakes, and one that justifies stringent sanitation protocols. These proposed changes are a step in the right direction. Thank you.

I approve of restricting wakesports in small Vermont lakes. The benefit very few people and wakesports make the lakes dangerous to people and wildlife.

As a kayaker, a canoeist, and SUP user, I have been affected, and have seen others affected by these wakes. Water sports should be safe for all users.

I approve of the proposed amendments to the Use of Public Water (UPW) Wakesports Rule adopted in 2024.

My name is Sean Brown and I am a homeowner on Lake Fairlee and a board member of the Lake Fairlee Association where I lead the Water Quality Action Committee. I strongly support the proposed rule changes that would increase the size of wake sports zones to 100 acres and the distances Wake boats in wake mode would be required to maintain from other lake users from 200 feet to 500 feet. I believe it will continue to make our lakes a resource for ALL to enjoy.

I supported the petition efforts that were allowed under the previous rule and consumed much energy, resources, and time to submit. While it would have been useful to allow the petitions to proceed, the current proposed rule change seems a beneficial compromise and standardizes the rule across the state.

Lake Fairlee, like many small lakes in Vermont, supports a variety of recreational uses including swimming, canoeing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, water skiing, and sailing. We have several summer camps where kids of all ages get to safely engage in these activities. Many athletes use the confined waters of Lake Fairlee to train for long distance swim competitions. Sailors on small Sunfish sailboats must follow the swirling and often unpredictable winds on our small lake and often traverse through the widest, deepest parts of the lake. Kayakers and Paddle Boarders cross the lake to find calm waters. All of these recreational activities coexist and use the same confined space on the lake without controversy or safety concerns.

Wake boats change all that. When a wake boat is active on the lake, swimmers have to avoid getting out to far from shore for fear of not being seen on the water. Kayakers and canoers are restricted to the perimeter of the lake to avoid getting swamped. Sailors on small boats following the wind must try and get to shore to avoid capsizing. In short, when a wake boat is on the lake, only a wake boat can be on the lake. These boats are not designed, and have no controls, to limit their negative impact on other uses of the lake. They may work well for larger bodies of water but they are just not appropriate for our small, multi-use Vermont lakes. Please protect the peaceful, safe enjoyment of our lakes by increasing the size of the wake sports zone and the distances required to be maintained from other lake users.

I am a property owner on Echo Lake in East Charleston, Vermont. I support the proposed DEC changes to wake boat regulations on Vermont Lakes. Vermont's freshwater ecosystems, which are essential to the health of nature and people, are under stress from the many ways Human activities have, and continue, to change the environment. For this reason our rules and regulations need to favor conserving our natural heritage.

I am writing in support of the proposed rules to prohibit wakesports on Vermont inland lakes including Lake Fairlee, to increase the minimum wakesports zone from 50 to 100 acres, to recognize the larger, more powerful wakes produced by wake boats by expanding the safety buffer from other lake users from 200 to 500 feet, and to please require hot-water decontamination of ballast tanks when wake boats move between waterbodies.

In addition, I ask that the DEC consider adopting the greater setbacks from shore and minimum depth standards recommended by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes to better protect ALL Vermont lakes.

As a Vermont property owner, specifically with a lakefront cottage on Lake Fairlee, I have witnessed more than one "close-call" incident where the wake from a wakesport boat knocked over an elderly person who was attempting to swim in the lake - the results were distressing, and could have been disastrous. I have also seen kids on paddleboards from the camps in distress due to the waves from a wakeboat washing over them and causing them to fall off. Clearly, the use of wakeboats in close vicinity to families and hundreds of young campers is inherently unsafe.

In addition, the high wakes caused by wakesports boats cause ongoing damage to the foreshore of every Lake Fairlee property owner - we see this in action every time the wakeboat on Lake Fairlee is racing around the lake.

I implore you to please put the safety and enjoyment of the lake(s) of ALL residents and visitors first. I am very concerned about boats which leave large wakes on the very small Holland Pond, where my family and I have spent summers for 40 years. I am concerned about their environmental impact including causing erosion, stirring up sediment, bringing into the pond invasive plants and submersing or tipping over loon's nests. For the past three years, the cove in front of my camp is the nursery for a pair of loons and their chick/s. I once saw a large wake scatter this loon family and the parent's distress in the few moments in which they searched for their chick on the surface. My family has always had kayaks and canoes - when my kids were young, I worried that the large wakes would destabilize their open kayaks and tip them over. This could be a scary experience, even with a life vest. Finally, I am a long-distance swimmer and can handle getting mouthfuls of lake water during a large wakes, but I worry about the little kids who are trying to learn to swim. I am in the water everyday and these large wakes come crashing towards the shore and have submerged me. It's such a small lake. I just feel sorry for the kids and moms (and chicks) who are learning to swim in the quiet coves.

Every effort should be made to keep Vermont's lakes and waterways as close to their natural condition as possible, this is our heritage and future. The proposed rule changes appear to restrict the spread of wakesports, which is to our benefit. A few individuals should not be allowed to dominate our lakes.

I am in the majority of people that support a wake boat ban due to concerns regarding public safety and environmental impacts. While the State's proposed regulation changes regarding increased operating zone and buffers will help provide additional protections to the public, the regulations do not go far enough to protect our environment and lake quality. These boats are known for their spread of invasive species. Now that the home lake rule is gone and decontamination sites are non-existent, we are basically opening our lakes up to the introduction of harmful invasive species. And when they do appear, it is not fair to expect local resources to manage the devastation. The majority of people in favor of a ban will be coming back to the State for funds to manage, contain or eradicate the problem. The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" comes to mind. If only we had been thoughtful and thorough enough to protect our environment. Such a shame!

I have been a user, and now a property owner on Lake Fairlee since the 1950s. I am asking the DEC to implement the 100 acre rule as written with no compromise so that wake-surfing would be prohibited on the Lake. Safety for other users is my primary concern, I am a kayaker and swimmer, but there is a significant milfoil bed right where the wakeboard "zone" is proposed. Controlling the milfoil there with the boats churning up the bottom seems counter productive to the significant efforts that the LFA has accomplished to date. Lastly, I would think that when the property owners, lake users, commercial camp owners, all three towns select boards AND conservation commissions have asked for this, that the State would comply with our request. Thank you. Ann Jane Kemon, Birch Point Lane, Lake Fairlee

Wake boats have no place on almost all of Vermont waters, with the exception of Lake Champlain. Protecting our shorelines from damage, protecting loon habitat, protecting our waters from invasive species, and ensuring the safety and well-being of families, children, paddlers, swimmers, and other wildlife is essential.

I ask that you ban wakeboats on Caspian Lake. I am a long distance swimmer and kayaker and I don't feel safe with the waves generated by wakeboats. I am concerned about our degrading shoreline and the impact of the waves when we have high water and flooding events. You have the ability to keep the culture, waters, the loons, and the birdlife safe by protecting Caspian Lake. Please ban the use of wakeboard.

You will choose to protect the waters of this state or live the remainder of your life with the shame and eventual regret. Our waters are a public good. Ban wakeboats.
Former representative from Barnard, Pomfret, Quechee and West Hartford
Carolyn Kehler

I support the proposed Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation amendments to the Use of Public Water (UPW) Wakesports Rule adopted in 2024. Our water quality, public safety, quiet enjoyment, and wildlife should not suffer for the pleasure of a few.

I am a Pediatrician and current board member of Camp Billings. I have served in this capacity for over two decades and am alarmed by the recent appearance of rapidly moving wakeboards pulled by specialized motorized boats near the waterfront along the shores of Camp Billings. The collision of one of these rapidly moving vessels, designed to create larger and more defined waves for the riders, poses a real danger to a camper on a paddleboard, a canoe, kayak or sailboat who is in the same area. As these children are in non motorized vessels, with slower and less accurate means of adjusting their course, they will not be able to evade these faster moving boats or the larger waves they create. Furthermore, the drivers of these boats do not have full visibility of the water in front of them due to the ballast they carry which lifts their bow. The presence of these boats and children in the water at the same time is an accident waiting to happen. Imagine if a 10 year old out in a sailfish is swamped by a wave: Neither child or driver will be able to avoid a collision. On behalf of all children who use Lake Fairlee, I request that wakesport boats be restricted in all areas of Lake Fairlee, notwithstanding their distance from shore.

We should be working to keep our bodies of water as natural as possible. There is no need to allow a sport that causes excessive erosion.

Vermont needs important protections against the environmental damage, water degradation, public safety hazards, and harm to wildlife that can result from wake boats on lakes that are ill-suited for them. I strongly oppose wake boats on Lake Caspian or any other Vermont lakes that are at risk.

Good evening,

I would like it on record that I oppose the proposed 2025 rules.

However, I want to ask a more fundamental question: what problem are we actually trying to solve? First, is the primary concern AIS, then we need to be honest about the real drivers. We know similar conversations are happening across the US and research shows that AIS spread is driven by overall boat traffic, not one specialized category of boats. Singling out wakeboats does not meaningfully address the dominant pathways for invasive species.

Or is the issue safety, we again need consistent regulation. Traditional ski boats travel at high speeds, tubers require erratic turns, and early morning fishing boats speed across a lake at the exact time swimmers seek calm water. Safety studies consistently show that speed, visibility, and operator behavior — not boat type — are the primary risk factors in recreational boating incidents across the country. We need better boater education.

Or is the concern shoreline erosion? Research confirms that wake energy exists across all types of motorboats operating near shore, not just wakeboats. Studies repeatedly show that distance from shore and water depth matter more than the label on the boat. Thousands of motorboats travel 200 feet off shore all summer, producing cumulative impacts far greater than a very small subset of wakeboats.

Wakeboats account for under 1% of registered boats in Vermont. Other states actively debating restrictions acknowledge that targeting wakeboats alone will not solve these problems in any measurable way.

I want to be clear: I'm not opposing some regulation, and I'm not advocating for eliminating all motorboats. What I am saying is that this effort will not deliver meaningful environmental or safety improvements, because it addresses a niche concern while ignoring broader, well documented drivers of negative impacts to our lakes.

I strongly urge the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to pause and maintain the 2024 rules for wakeboats. Ask what outcomes you are trying to achieve, and whether this approach is the best use of limited time and resources of your agency. Vermont's lakes deserve thoughtful, evidence based policy — not restrictions that will NOT drive meaningful results.

We Vermont lake lovers are "all on the same page" in that we all love our lake environments and our lake communities. Therefore, I do not understand how wake-boaters justify the negative impacts that their activity has on such a disproportionately large amount of other lake users. Imagine if 75 Vermonters were enjoying a movie at a theater. What would it feel like if 5 of us engaged in a loud conversation in the middle of the film? That's what I feel like when wakesports disrupt my lake experiences. Please ban them entirely as your current rule change only will concentrate wake-boaters into a small group of lakes.

I am in favor of stricter regulations for wake boats. The large waves they create damage shorelines, threaten the safety of other boaters, and swamp the nests of loons making it impossible for them to raise young. With so many other forms of recreation on the water available, it seems unfortunate and unnecessary to have wake boats on Vermont's bodies of water at all.

I have a deep love for Caspian Lake. I go there almost every day in the summer, and its cooling waters have helped me survive a decade of farming through the hot days. The quiet waters soothe my heart on hard days, and often when I am sitting in silence on the shore I see loons swimming by. I want to speak for myself, but also for all of the wild beings for whom the lake is home. I believe it is our responsibility as humans to limit our disruption of their lives through our activities, including sound pollution and the unintended introduction of invasive species. I want to see the animals who live in and by the lake protected from disruption of the important activities of their lives, including feeding, mating, and raising their young. Please help protect their safety and quality of life, for their own sake and for those of us who care for them. I believe that we have to place this care for these vulnerable beings above our own preferences for recreation. Further, I believe that this protection benefits the many human visitors to the lake who appreciate its quiet beauty.

Wakeboats should be prohibited on all lakes except Lake Champlain and Lake Memphramagog. All other lakes aren't big enough.

I support the proposed amendments.

When DEC first implemented its wakesports rule, it acknowledged that public safety had not been fully considered and proposed addressing safety on a lake-by-lake basis through individual petitions. Nine lakes submitted petitions. DEC wisely decided that statewide rule amendments were the more effective way to protect public safety. The current amendments do not move the goalposts—they correct a significant omission in the original rules.

Existing science supports these changes, but common sense matters just as much. If wakes are powerful enough to damage shorelines and docks, they are powerful enough to harm people.

Some have raised concerns that wake boats would now be required to yield to other users 500 feet away. That principle already exists. Non-motorized watercraft—canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards—always have the right of way. The 500-foot setback simply corrects an inconsistency between safety rules for people and safety rules for shorelines.

As for the claimed lack of reported conflicts, that argument is not credible. When I asked people whether they had ever reported conflicts, they were surprised to learn that reporting was even an option. They didn't know where to report incidents or expect that doing so would lead to action. Without a clear, accessible, and well-publicized reporting system, it is unfair and unreasonable to treat the absence of formal reports as evidence that conflicts don't exist.

For these reasons, DEC's proposed amendments are critical to public safety, and I strongly support their adoption.

This is a push by a group of a few that want to control reasonable laws already in place. None motorized users don't pay any registration fees and should not try to control a major use of the motorized users that pay registration fees. The primary push for the is from The Friends of the Waterbury Reservoir and they seem to be promoting the uneducated Umiak rental users that clutter the Waterbury Reservoir. This rental service should be removed from state property and direct correspondence should be asked to all those registered boaters, that want to teach their children how to waterski. I say no changes !

I support and would like you to support the continued efforts towards refining the UPW.

The conduct of Wakesports and the use of wake boats — with their enhanced, ocean-sized wakes — has a profoundly negative impact on paddlers, anglers, remote campers, and other long-standing users engaged in normal recreational activities. Furthermore, the environmental impact is substantial, from larger waves hitting the shore, to potential invasive species being imported from the ballast. Therefore, imposing more limits and restrictions on the area where this sport can happen is a good thing.

As a user of Lake Dunmore, with a seasonal home on that lake, I support the proposed amendments to the wakesports rule, primarily because I believe they will increase the safety of lake users like me. In addition, I believe they will help improve water quality in Lake Dunmore, which has been rated "poor," by reducing shoreline erosion. Furthermore, these strengthening changes to the rule also help with the ongoing effort to control invasive species, which has had some success here.

Wakes can potentially be life threatening to people & animals on, in or near bodies of water.

Quiet Idyllic nature is what draws tourists here, the profitability of noisy boat activities should not be the target of any tourist attraction in Vermont, this will only hurt long-term profits and Vermont's image of being a safe refuge from a noisy world.

I urge that UPW Rules regarding wake boats and where they may be used in VT be strengthened.

Recreation for a select wealthy few must not be allowed to damage waters and aquatic life. Natural bodies of water must be protected. And aquatic life, including water fowl, water plants and fish and shell-fish must all be protected from disturbance by humans, including by wake boats.

Please no waking on the Waterbury Reservoir

Hello — I'm a Vermont resident / lake user. I'm writing to comment on the proposed 2026 changes to the Vermont Use of Public Waters wakeboat/wakesports provisions.

I urge you to revise the proposal rather than adopt it as written. My concern is that the proposed zone criteria (including added minimum length requirements and added buffers as described) could reduce the number of lakes where wakesports zones can qualify, impacting access for responsible users.

I support clear rules that protect safety and shorelines and are enforceable and fair. Please consider keeping the current mapped-zone framework and making any adjustments to narrowly tailored perceived issues rather than broad changes that significantly reduce eligibility.

Thank you.

I am Amy McLaughlin; I am Property Owner on Lake Fairlee; My Family has been on the lake for 50 years. I do not support any changes to the current rule. These proposed changes are NOT Based on science or facts. NOTHING has changed from the original rules, in fact there have been no reports from Fish and Wildlife Wardens of any conflict or violations, the current rules are working.

ANR, where is the non-bias fact-based studies that support the new proposed 100 Continuous acre rule? It seems to me the only data being looked at has been given by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes. So, I will reference quotes exactly from Responsible wakes own petition from 2022.

I would like to state for the record that in March of 2022 Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes petitioned the ANR in to amend the Vermont Use of Public Water Rules to regulate wake sports and proposed an amendment that said that 60 contiguous acres satisfied them.

While I think 50 continuous acres is satisfactory Responsible wakes clearly outlines a Justification for a 60 contiguous acre Wake Sport Zone. Their exact quote "To address these concerns (which they refer to as safety and enjoyment of others), we propose the creation of a 60-contiguous acre minimum Wake Sport Zone, which would provide adequate space for the operation of wake boats while allowing other traditional lake activities to continue."

Again, Responsible Wakes own petition states "In summary, we propose a 60-contiguous acre minimum Wake Sport Zone for wake boat activities, which is in keeping with previous rulemaking and will help maintain the public benefit provided by the State for the enjoyment of other, less impactful, activities, such as waterskiing, cruising, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, paddleboarding, swimming, and fishing."

Why did ANR deemed 50 acres at first, and then increase to 100 acres. Why do the requirements keep changing without data to support it, what is this driven by?

We believe 50 contiguous acres is the correct number, and the opposition acknowledges 60 acres as reasonable, but NOT 100 acres. Why keep moving the goalposts? I urge you to maintain the original rule and clarify what unbiased data backs this current proposed change.

I support the proposed changes, but they do not go far enough to protect people on Lake Fairlee and I wish that they were more protective. The negative impact of wakeboarding is real and dangerous. I have a house and dock on Lake Fairlee and regularly see people being disrupted due to wakeboarding on the lake. Wakeboarding makes it extremely rough for kayakers who get swamped by the wake which I have seen from my dock many times and experienced myself. Additionally, I personally have been knocked off of my paddle board by the wake created by wakeboarders. It was dangerous and scary. There are multiple camps on our lake as well as treasure island -- we have many novice swimmers who should not have to navigate dangerous waters on a small lake. Wakeboard users state that their sport does not cause disruptions to others but that is absolutely untrue; I have both experienced and witnessed the negative effects of wakeboarding. A small number of people who desire to wakeboard should not be able to negatively effect a large number of people who want to peacefully enjoy the lake. Thank you. Wake boarding should be illegal everywhere. our fresh water lakeshorelines cannot withstand these gas guzzling machines.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft rule revisions. I commend the Agency for both improving the rules on operation of wakeboats and making changes that improve the rules generally. My compliments to all involved.

My comments focus, with one exception, on provisions of the rules that apply to wakeboats and their operation. In general, I support all of the proposed changes related to wakesports so as to improve protection of aquatic resources and better balance wakesports and other recreational use. My preference would be to prohibit wakesports on all of Vermont's inland waterbodies, but I recognize that is beyond the Agency's authority.

Several specific comments follow.

1.1 – The introductory paragraph of the purpose states that managing uses to avoid “negative environmental impacts” is an objective, but only in relation to invasive aquatic species. The statement should be much more expansive, so that it addresses all negative shoreline and aquatic ecosystem impacts, not just invasive species.

3.6 – The addition of a 500 buffer zone for wakesports is an excellent change that will enhance protection of loon nests.

3.7(c) – Likewise the 500 foot buffer zone for swimmers and other boaters is important for the safety of others, especially swimmers and paddlers.

3.7(g) – The rule provides for modifications to wakeboat restrictions based on evidence of potential negative impacts on “a lake management activity, scientific research, or water quality.” It is not clear if negative aquatic ecosystem impacts, such as degradation of fish spawning habitat would trigger a review and possible change in wakesport restrictions on a waterbody. Ecosystem impacts should be included as a potential factor.

5.19 – The expansion of the minimum size to 100 acres and the additional requirement the zone be at least 3,000 feet long are important improvements to the definition.

Thank you for your efforts to protect Vermont's water resources.

BTF

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because of the surface threats to other vessels, swimmers, and paddlers, near shoreline disruptions and erosion, and potential damage to shoreline structures impacted by these wakes

Wake boats are incredibly disruptive to the beauty and natural life of lake Fairlee. It feels really messed up to come to a beautiful place, and impact the wildlife and shoreline so negatively. Further more, as someone who was a camper for 4 years on this beloved lake, and a counselor for 7, the idea of wake boats plowing by, harming the animals that nest near shorelines, eroding the vegetation, and creating large unsafe waves for campers partaking in swim lessons (which go on throughout the full day) feels really ridiculous, and incredibly selfish. I'm a little shocked this is even up for debate. Empathy is one of the most wonderful things that make us human. Why would we want to impact the land and the animals that are so giving to us? Why would we be okay with jeopardizing the safety for hundreds of campers, just for some selfish fun? Irreparable damage will be done if we do not ban wake boats.

Wake boats have no place on a lake that children are learning to swim in!! I agree with the proposed changes.

I was a counselor at Camp Aloha Hive for 5 summers and still spend time on Lake Fairlee each summer as a nearby Vermont resident. In my experience, the presence of wake boats on the lake makes swimming, canoeing, and kayaking feel much more precarious and less welcome. These are forms of recreation that should be centered and widely accessible.

Safety is crucial on lake fairlee. As a former Hive Counselor (of 8 years), I understand how important it is to maintain a wake-free lake for everyone's safety and enjoyment. Also, I remember when we had no loons, and would hate to see them hurt or gone again.

Invasive species (JPA already trying to deal with Eurasian Milfoil), safety issues for kayaks, canoes, sailboats, swimmers and shorelines.

The proposed changes make good sense for so many reasons!!! Our environment needs our help in SO many ways and this is one of them.

Please, as residents on Shadow Lake we beg you to strengthen and uphold the rule banning wake sports on our beloved lake!!! Considering the size of the lake, not to mention the compromised failing damn situation, it seems obvious allowing wake sports is not a wise decision! Please do the right thing for the lake and its many residents (human, flora and fauna) who require a peaceful, undisturbed habitat.

I'm a property owner of West Fairlee who goes swimming in Lake Fairlee. I have been enjoying the lake as a swimmer for years and would like to see it protected for future generations of swimmers and in fact for all of us to enjoy. Wake boating activity has often prevented me, my family and guests from swimming in the lake, since we don't want to be run over by a wake boater who cannot see us and since the large waves spoil the swimming experience. I know that I am not alone in being affected negatively by the wake boats. Of all the activities people pursue on and near the lake, from paddling, sailing, waterskiing, swimming, and fishing, to camping, no activity endangers the safety of others as much as wake boating. To this we can add the known environmental effects. Lakes of the size of Lake Fairlee are simply too small to allow for safe wake boating. While I support the DEC's proposal, I think that it should be strengthened by adopting the RWVL rule changes. I therefore ask you not to compromise the safety of an entire community to allow a small number of people to pursue their hobby, and to implement a minimum 100-acre WSZ.

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because:

1. Of the surface threats to other vessels, swimmers, and paddlers
2. Near shoreline disruptions and erosion
3. Damage to shoreline structures impacted by these wakes
4. Nutrient release events to the water
5. Deep penetration propeller downwash effects
6. Wave attenuation distances prompting changes to traditional buffer distances
7. The amended rule will conserve the water quality and recreational safety of the Waterbury Reservoir, along with many other lakes similarly situated
8. Wakesports issues are not limited to Vermont – they are nationwide
9. The largest number of users on Vermont's inland lakes are low-impact users, such as, swimmers, kayakers, canoeists, fisher-people, standup paddle boarders, nature photographers, adaptive sports users, water-skiers, motorboat users, etc.
10. When even one wakesporter shows up, many of the normal users simply leave
11. Wildlife is abundant both in our lakes and around them. It is important to keep them safe and to provide them with a habitat that they can flourish in. These lakes are home to loons, eagles, mink, otters, herons, snapping turtles, and many fish species.

I am writing to urge you to reject the proposed changes to the wakesports regulations and keep the current rules in place specifically, to reject the requirement for 100 contiguous acres and the increase of the safety offset to 500 feet. I respectfully ask that you:

- Reject the proposed 100-acre zone requirement,
- Maintain the current 50-acre minimum, and
- Keep the safety offset at 250 feet, like all other boats

Our lakes are more than scenic landscapes they are places where we stay active, create memories, and build lasting traditions.

Overregulating access, especially when the existing rules are working, would take these opportunities away from families who use the lake respectfully and safely. Restricting access to public waters is neither fair nor balanced. As recreation evolves, everyone should continue to have reasonable access to these shared resources.

Under the current rules, lake users such as campers, anglers, swimmers, paddlers, and wakeboarders have shared the water safely and respectfully.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources states that “use conflicts shall be managed using the least restrictive approach practicable that adequately addresses the conflicts.” I urge you to honor that principle. The current wakesports rules reflect this balance by protecting safety and access while allowing diverse recreational uses to coexist.

Let us continue to support policies that reflect law, science, community values, access, and fairness. I respectfully urge you to keep the current wakesports rules in place and focus on inclusive, evidence-driven solutions for Lake Fairlee.

As a physician and a lifelong lake lover, I am writing to respectfully urge you to reject the proposed changes to the wakesports regulations particularly the increase in required contiguous lake area to 100 acres and the expansion of the safety offset to 500 feet. I ask that you keep the current wakesports rules in place, which already provide a fair and functional balance among different lake users. Beyond my medical practice, I am also part of a community that deeply values our lakes not only for recreation, but for our health, family traditions, and connection to natural beauty. Lakes are where we unplug, move our bodies, and spend meaningful time with loved ones. They are shared spaces where paddlers, swimmers, anglers, and boaters of all kinds have peacefully coexisted for generations. The current rules already prioritize safety and respectful use while allowing people of all ages to participate in the outdoor activities that best suit them. Restricting access to public waters is neither fair nor balanced. As recreation evolves, we should all be able to continue using these shared resources.

As a physician, I understand the importance of both physical activity and mental well-being, and wakesports support both. Making them less accessible by limiting their use to only the largest lakes risks excluding families and individuals from a healthy and joyful way of engaging with the outdoors. For these reasons, I oppose the newly proposed rules. I urge you to keep the existing regulations in place and protect both the diversity of lake users and the well-being of the communities that cherish Lake Fairlee.

The Common Loon is a widely recognized indicator species (or bio-sentinel) for the health of freshwater lakes. Since 2011, I have served as the Lake Fairlee loon watch volunteer for the Vermont Loon Conservation Project. In 2016, a pair of loons first nested at the mouth of Blood Brook, adjacent to my property, and successfully hatched one chick. They have returned every year since then to a loon nesting raft I maintain at the northern end of Lake Fairlee, producing a total of 10 chicks over the past decade.

This past year, a second pair of loons began nesting toward the southern end of Lake Fairlee at the mouth of Middlebrook near the public boat launch between Horizons Camp and Camp Billings. Though the nest with two eggs was abandoned due to its proximity to a camper crossing bridge, the pair will likely try again in a more secluded adjacent area this coming spring.

For a small lake hosting five summer camps, Lake Fairlee stands out as a welcoming and productive loon habitat. Lake residents have become fond of their haunting calls at night and find their endearing behavior — especially when tending to their chicks — a highlight of the summer. Even the sign at the entrance to the Treasure Island public beach depicts a loon.

However, loons are sensitive to shoreline development, boat traffic, and water level fluctuations, making them indicators of human impact on ecosystems. This is especially true once the chicks leave the nest and travel throughout the lake with one or two parents nearby. While our loons have grown accustomed to canoes, paddleboards, kayaks, and the occasional water skier, adding powerful wake boats to the mix is a very bad idea. This is especially true given the presence of a second loon nesting pair whose territory is directly adjacent to the proposed wakesport zone.

I encourage you to preserve the current proposal that excludes wake boats entirely from Lake Fairlee. There is no room for flexibility or nuance in the proposed rule. For example, allowing one wake boat at a time would return us to the current status. There have been many conflicts between wake boats and other users since the current rule was implemented for the summer of 2024. Amending the proposed regulation to allow these disruptive boats is a safety concern for campers and a possible tipping point for our loon population. How wonderful that Lake Fairlee has been the center of youth summer camps for over 100 years and, for over a quarter century, has now been host to a growing loon population. We must treasure and safeguard this legacy.

I agree with the proposed changes to wakesports on Vermont lakes. I have been swimming, canoeing, and recreating on the Waterbury reservoir since childhood - it is one of my favorite places in the world.

When there are wake boats on the lake, it becomes almost impossible to enjoy just swimming or paddling.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed Use of Public Waters Rule addressing wakeboats on Vermont lakes and ponds.

I support adoption of a home lake rule for wakeboats as a necessary and evidence-based management strategy to reduce the risk of aquatic invasive species (AIS) introduction and spread within Vermont's public waters.

AIS represent a significant and permanent threat to lake ecosystems, water quality, and designated uses. Once established, invasive species are difficult or impossible to eradicate, impose substantial long-term management costs, and degrade ecological function. Prevention is therefore the most effective and fiscally responsible management approach.

Wakeboats pose a heightened AIS transmission risk due to their design and operational characteristics. Their ballast systems retain and circulate large volumes of raw lake water, including water that cannot be fully drained through standard launch procedures. These enclosed systems limit visual inspection, impede complete drying between uses, and allow for the transport of microscopic organisms and plant fragments across waterbodies.

Currently, Vermont lacks the infrastructure, standardized protocols, and trained personnel necessary to effectively decontaminate wakeboat ballast systems between lakes. Existing aquatic nuisance species inspection programs and wash stations are not designed to access or treat enclosed ballast tanks, nor do they provide consistent, verifiable mitigation of AIS risk associated with wakeboat transport. In the absence of such capacity, reliance on voluntary compliance or general cleaning requirements is insufficient to ensure protection of public waters.

A home lake designation for wakeboats is a practical, enforceable, and preventative management tool that directly addresses this documented risk pathway. Limiting wakeboat operation to a single waterbody substantially reduces inter-lake AIS transmission while preserving recreational opportunity within defined parameters. This approach is consistent with the precautionary principle and adaptive management practices used in aquatic resource protection.

The proposed rule aligns with the statutory intent of the Use of Public Waters Rules to manage recreational use in a manner that minimizes conflicts, protects natural resource values, and serves the best interests of both current and future generations. Given the irreversible impacts associated with AIS establishment, regulatory action that prioritizes prevention is warranted.

For these reasons, I urge the Department of Environmental Conservation to adopt the proposed rule and implement a home lake requirement for wakeboats as part of a comprehensive AIS prevention strategy.

Thank you for your consideration and stewardship of Vermont's public waters.

I am an avid user of the Waterbury Reservoir with my family of 4. We enjoy swimming, camping and sometimes paddling along the water. While I would prefer not to share the water with power boats, I appreciate that there are many competing interests and allowing some power boats on the water makes sense for VT recreation. That said, allowing wake boats goes too far, especially in endangering our wildlife. More than the disruption to human recreators, the wake boats interfere with the wildlife whose health should come before human entertainment. Thank you for continuing to strengthen these regulations, manage mixed use of our lakes, and protect our VT wildlife.

I'm writing as someone who deeply cares about Lake Fairlee and wants to speak up about the proposed changes to the wakesports rules. I strongly support keeping the current rules as they are, and I oppose increasing the minimum lake size to 100 acres for wakesports. This change would effectively target Lake Fairlee. I urge you instead to use the 60-acre threshold that the anti-wakes group itself originally recommended.

I spend a lot of time on Lake Fairlee, not only wakeboarding, but also fishing, swimming, and spending time with friends and family. I truly believe we can all continue to share the lake safely and respectfully, just as we do now. It doesn't have to be one group versus another. Everyone should be able to enjoy the lake they love.

It also seems that wakesports are being unfairly blamed for the problem of invasive species. Milfoil existed long before wakeboats, and the reality is that any boat can spread invasive species if it is not properly cleaned and decontaminated. Changing the wakesports rules will not solve this issue. What we actually need is better education, stronger requirements for boat cleaning, and meaningful enforcement to prevent the spread of milfoil.

If wakesports are pushed off most lakes, the remaining lakes will simply become more crowded, which could make the problem worse—not better. That outcome helps no one.

I understand and share the goal of protecting clean and safe lakes. I just believe we should focus on solving the real problem, rather than targeting wakeboats because they are an easy focus. Please keep the current wakesports rules in place and focus on protecting our lakes in a fair and effective way.

I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rules. I oppose adopting the proposal as written. I support reasonable lake protections, but I'm concerned the proposal is overly broad and may not be enforceable in real conditions.

This proposal puts additional pressure on Natural Resources police to enforce regulations that require specific measurements. A fixed 500-foot buffer and 3,000-foot run requirement raise questions about how they will be measured and enforced consistently on the water.

How will the regulations be enforced without additional equipment to measure these distances?

I served on a state advisory committee also dealing with this issue. It places more responsibility on Natural Resources officers when they can be focusing on other, more dangerous activities.

I firmly support strengthening the DEC Use of Public Water Rule. Wake boats have plenty of access to waters where they can practice their sport. There is no good reason to expand their access, range or the acreage where they roam. Let the turtles, loons and other creatures live and thrive without being disturbed unnecessarily.

Seems to me that a very, very small minority of second homeowners, mostly from out-of-state want the new regulations watered down so they can continue their use of the destruction of wake-boats. The new regs don't go far enough to prevent contamination from those boats. Once invasives are introduced, there is no going back. It would cost taxpayers bocou bucks to try to clean up Willoughby after invasives have taken hold.

I appreciate the proposed improvements to wakeboat regulations. However I am concerned about two areas where they don't go far enough.

One is public safety. As a swimmer and paddler I remain fearful of being on a lake where wakeboats are permitted with a safety buffer of only 500 feet. Even worse is a scenario where I will have no recourse if one of these boats goes off course and comes even closer than this 500 foot buffer. Their mass and wake size pose an imminent threat to my health as well as my right to peaceful recreation and should not be allowed.

The other is water quality and invasive species. These boats are floating environmental time bombs that rely on ballast water to create their wakes. When allowed to travel from lake to lake the invasives come with them seeding biological havoc and irreparable damage. This is not in the public interest and should not be allowed.

My name is Francine Chittenden, a 50-year Waterbury resident, and board member of the Friends of Waterbury Reservoir. I support the proposed changes in the rule. This change will address many of the safety concerns raised through petitions from 11 lakes and protect an additional 13 small lakes and ponds in Vermont.

I am pleased to see that the recommendations being put forward by ANR are based on scientific facts.

A scientific meta-analysis of wakesurfing effects science conducted by the Terra Vigilis Environmental Services Group in 2024 concludes: "There is an impressive consistency in the studies being conducted which demonstrates larger, faster, high energy, large displacement wave risks across multiple areas including:

- 1) Surface threats to other vessels
- 2) Near shoreline disruptions
- 3) Bottom scrubbing effects
- 4) Shoreline structure impacts
- 5) Nutrient release events to the water column
- 6) Deep penetration propeller downwash effects
- 7) Wave attenuation distances prompting changes to traditional buffer distances" ...

I have heard no scientific information from the wakesports industry to support their position that no additional regulation is necessary.

Lake Bomoseen hosts the most wakeboats and has the highest number of AIS of any lake in Vermont outside of Lake Champlain. In my opinion Lake Bomoseen is not a good model for the rest of us.

The amended rule will conserve the water quality and recreational safety of the Waterbury Reservoir, along with many other lakes similarly situated.

The word "conservation" is defined as "the preservation and protection of land and other natural resources for enjoyment by future generations". This decision will affect generations to come. As a proud Vermonter, I support the proposed changes to the Agency of Natural Resources Use of Public Waters Rules.

Respectfully Submitted,
Francine Chittenden

Vermont should pride itself on its pristine lakes and ponds. I am against machines that disturb the waters, disturb visitors, and leave gas and slime behind on the shores and the marshlands. It's as obscene and damaging to the landscape as if Vermont started allowing billboards again.

Waterskiing and lake access is an integral part of people's lives, and with such limited access for these sports taking it away will only hurt people. I do not think the water is owned by any one person and people should be able to freely use the lakes for recreational use.

Wake sports require a minimum of 100-acre WSZ & 3,000-ft run. It is well known at this point that large wake boat waves can unexpectedly overwhelm boaters, paddlers, swimmers, etc. I have personally been surprised by the force of the waves from a wake boat when swimming with my children on Sunset Lake in Benson. I support VT DEC's proposal, but urge you provide further protection by adopting RWVL's rule changes. Thank you.

We support the proposed changes.

PLEASE do NOT allow Wakesurfing on Sunrise, Sunset or Perch Pond. It endangers not only the water and the environment, (and the quiet!) but also swimmers and small boat users...

I support the strengthening of the UPW rules... and would suggest that the minimum water depth for wake boats should be 30 feet -- and the minimum setback from shoreline and other users should be 700 feet. Both suggestions are supported by recent studies.

Wake sports require a minimum of 100-acre WSZ & 3,000-ft run. It is well known at this point that large wake boat waves can unexpectedly overwhelm boaters, paddlers, swimmers, etc. I have personally been surprised by the force of the waves from a wake boat when swimming with my family on Sunset Lake in Benson. I support VT DEC's proposal, but urge you provide further protection by adopting RWVL's rule changes. Thank you.

I have visited Lake Willoughby for over 30 years now and I am a property owner. Willoughby is a magical lake that more than deserves the state's protection. It is a small lake that has managed to keep invasive species at bay. Allowing wake boats is problematic for two reasons- 1) given the size of the lake the wave action on the lake greatly disturbed other occupants using the lake— ie there is not enough space for wake boat users to be on the lake without unduly hindering others use. 2) in order to continue to protect the water the state would need to install a special cleaning system that irrigates the boat with using very high temperature water. It is my understanding the state does not plan to do this. Allowing wake boats without this safe guard all but guarantees Willoughby will join the ranks of other lakes in the state whose beauty has been decimated by invasive species. There are plenty of larger lakes with more facilities where boat owners can use water crafts. Lake Willoughby continues to be a gem for the state and I hope that state will continue to defend it.

Wake sports require a minimum of 100-acre WSZ & 3,000-ft run. Large wake boat waves can unexpectedly overwhelm boaters, paddlers, swimmers and it is dangerous. I have been surprised by the force of the waves from a wake boat when swimming with my family on Sunset Lake in Benson. I support VT DEC's proposal, but urge you provide further protection by adopting RWVL's rule changes. Thank you.

In addition to safety concerns, wakesports are responsible for polluting the lake, and environmental disturbances that cause damage to the flora and fauna of the lake and its environs. Wake sports require a minimum of 100-acre WSZ & 3,000-ft run. It is well known at this point that large wake boat waves can unexpectedly overwhelm boaters, paddlers, swimmers, etc. I have personally been surprised by the force of the waves from a wake boat when swimming with my children on Sunset Lake in Benson, or have seen heedless sailors pilot their boats too close and too quickly toward families swimming or floating on inner tubes. I support VT DEC's proposal, but urge you provide further protection by adopting RWVL's rule changes. Thank you.

Motor boats with large engines to pull water skier or tubes create waves that erode the shoreline of Lake Sunset. This erosion is harmful to the lake. just paddling along the perimeter of the lake you can see the damage done. Sunset is too small for big motor boats. A row boat with a motor is fine. The pontoon/party bar boats are okay since most do not go fast on the lake. Several years ago when a beaver dam broke causing a large amount of debris to end up in the lake. A hurricane several years ago also cause damage with high water.

I am a lifelong resident of Vermont, and have been on many Vermont lakes. During WWII, my father bought a lot on Lake Sunset in Benson, and gave it to me in 1983, where I built a cottage which is now my home. I have seen the damage to the lake shore when motor boats are on the lake. They do serious damage. Wake boats should not be on small lakes. I grew up on Lake Champlain, and even there motorboats cause damage to the shores.

Lake Sunset is one of the most clear lakes anywhere. Seeing down 50 ft. is now normal and very special. Before the flooding, caused by the high winds and rain in about 2013, we could see down even further, After the flooding, which damaged the shores, similarly to what a wake boat would do) visibility was cut to to 10-20 feet.

After a couple years 20-25 feet became the norm. Thankfully visibility has improved, but it took several years to get to where it is now.

As stated above, motor boats, and especially wake boats, would end a lot of the beauty and specialness of Sunset and all small lakes anywhere. Sunset is a very special lake. We should cherish it, not destroy it's beauty and specialness. Wake boats should be banned from all small lakes in Vermont.

I strongly support the changes DEC is proposing to the UPW rules regarding Wakesports. As a land owner on Sunrise Lake I understand the hard work that goes into keeping our lakes in the best shape possible for stewardship AND recreation.

Wakesports negatively impact the local environment - no reasonable person would disagree that the effect of the "sporting" waves erodes the shorelines, disturbs sediment and plant/animal life, creates noise pollution, etc. People fishing, canoeing, and swimming are all negatively effected by the presence of Wakesports boats and their surfers. There are direct safety effects from fast moving boats on mid-sized lakes with operators distracted by their presence and purpose - specifically to make waves and watch their charges surf. Idyllic times by the effected mid-sized lakes in Vermont will be continue to be in jeopardy as powerboats roar back and forth while sprinting up and down these lakes.

I urge you to pass these new changes and make VT lakes safer, healthier, and better for everyone.

Great Averill and Little Averill are special. They are still relatively quiet, calm, clean and undeveloped.

My family and friends have enjoyed this special environment for over 60 years. I have seen changes and development on Averill, but it remains much better than so many other lakes.

Vermont must keep the Averill lake this way. There are plenty of lakes for noisy motorized play.

Thank you

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because the majority of people using Vermont's inland lakes are low-impact recreationists, including swimmers, kayakers, canoeists, anglers, and stand-up paddleboarders. Wakesurfing, by comparison, is highly disruptive to other lake users as well as to wildlife and the surrounding environment.

Restricting wakesurfing on additional lakes would affect only a small number of users, while the impacts of wakesurfing currently fall on the many people who seek to enjoy these waters in quieter, lower-impact ways. These amendments will help ensure that Vermont's lakes remain safe, accessible, and enjoyable for the greatest number of people.

I support the strengthening the rule

I am a homeowner at Lake Willoughby and my family has been on the lake for more than 50 years - I am strongly supportive of the changes to the rule regarding Wakesports and believe we should be keeping the home lake rule as previously defined. We must implement them for the 2026 boating season. There is no going back once we introduce AIS to our inland lakes or once someone is seriously injured.

That said, I did want to make a few comments that I believe are important to a number of arguments being made by the wakesport proponents tonight and last week.

A 2024 DEC document indicated there were no reports of wakesports-related accidents or incidents during the 2024 boating season. Wakesports proponents have referenced this fact repeatedly at last week's hearing and concluded – and expect the rest of us to believe – that because no accidents or incidents were reported, the rules are working and everyone on our lakes is coexisting without complaint.

Unfortunately, that conclusion is seriously flawed.

In December 2024, two public hearings were held on nine lake petitions seeking to prohibit wakesports. At those hearings, many speakers described incidents or near accidents they or others they knew had experienced with wake boats. They spoke passionately about how they and the people they knew had modified their own behavior – leaving a lake when wake boats came out or not venturing onto the water if wake boats were present – to avoid incidents or exposing themselves unnecessarily to danger.

But how often do law enforcement reports get made on any crime? A recent article which I will provide in my formal submission indicates only a fraction of crime is reported to police- about 40% of violent crimes and about 30% of property crimes are actually reported to law enforcement. Other nuisance crimes are suspected to be reported with even greater rarity.

Let's be absolutely clear - the lack of reported wake boat-related incidents does not reflect what is actually happening on Vermont's wakesports eligible lakes. On Lake Willoughby residents know that there is no fish and wildlife warden, no regular state police or other law enforcement, and that the nearest authority able to enforce anything is all the way up in Newport. DEC has made it clear that the new rule will not earmark any additional funding for enforcement.

The only conclusions that one can reasonably draw from the 2024 DEC report are (1) people on and around our lakes know enforcement of any of Vermont's boating regulations is rare, (2) there is no established/clear process for reporting incidents when they do occur and (3) the responsibility falls to the individual (since there is no enforcement) to opt out of risky situations to stay safe.

Nothing is perfect and these proposed rules are far from perfect. Two proposed changes better address safety concerns. Increasing the size of the wakesports zone will actually remove a number of our smaller lakes from the wakesports eligible list. Increasing the buffer to shore and other users will protect others recreating on or near the water of lakes remaining on the list. Adopting these two rules – and implementing them for the 2026 boating season - is absolutely critical. Adopt them. Have them in place for the 2026 boating season. Let's keep Vermont's inland lakes safe for everyone who enjoys them.

Dana L.R. Fowler

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed changes to the Use of Public Waters Rules described in Rule Number 25P045. I am a member of the Hinesburg Conservation Commission but am writing here as an individual, a life-long kayaker and a volunteer water quality sampler of streams flowing directly into Lake Iroquois.

I believe that the current Vermont Use of Public Water Rules do not provide sufficient protection to aquatic and shoreline habitats from the destructive force of wake boats, particularly in smaller bodies of water. The current Rules most certainly do not protect wildlife, recreational users, and surrounding home owners from the extremely disruptive effects of wake boats on smaller lakes like Lake Iroquois. The boats generate large waves that can travel silently underwater and can overwhelm swimmers, paddlers and boaters. Most importantly they are potentially dangerous and introduce an element of fear and personal violation into an otherwise calm and joyful natural environment.

I know that proponents of wake boat use argue that complaints to DEC are low. To that I suggest that formal complaints speeding are hardly a good indicator of the number of violations of our traffic laws and while everyone knows how to call the local police, few know to complain to the DEC.

I am very encouraged by DEC's recognition of the need to strengthen protections from wake boats, which is very much in the public interest.

I support the strengthening of the DEC Use of Public Water Rule. I am a kayaker/paddle boarder/canoer and think that wake boats are dangerous and not good for the environment.

Please don't allow wake boats in the small pristine lakes in the Northeast Kingdom. And specifically Little Averill lake. The lake is way too small to efficiently use one of these boats and the benefit does not equal the damage that will be caused by spreading various invasives and shoreline damage.

Hello,

Thank you, DEC, for protecting VT's lake and the users of those lakes.

I support the proposed changes to the Wakesports rule, and I implore DEC to implement the rule as it is currently written without any flexibility or nuance to continue to allow one wake boat operate at a time. This would simply maintain the current status and not protect other lake users, including the 1800 campers that come to the lake each summer.

Do not compromise on safety for lake users. Wakesports must be prohibited for the safety of all lake users, young campers, paddlers, waterskiers, anglers, sailors, etc., Do not succumb to pressure from the small group of wakesurfers and the boating industry.

I was a 30-year resident of Thetford Center and a frequent user of Lake Fairlee. My children learned to swim in Lake Fairlee. Their father works at one of the summer camps on the lake. I return every year and swim, kayak and canoe on Lake Fairlee (and other VT lakes). I worked for the National Park Service for 32 years supporting wise management of public spaces and advocating for outdoor recreation. Safety is always of utmost importance. In addition, I am an active outdoor recreationalist, a kayaker, canoer, hiker and biker. Having to confront big waves and motor boats on small lakes is not fun, safe, or conducive to safely enjoying non-motorized recreation.

The majority of Vermonters, including myself, have consistently said: wake sports do not belong on Vermont's small lakes. I strongly support the proposed rule changes that would protect 13 more lakes from wake sports, including Lake Fairlee.

Lake Fairlee is unique. There are 5 summer camps on the lake, bringing more than 1,800 campers, some as young as 7, learn to canoe, kayak, swim, sail, and waterski on the lake. Lake Fairlee has the highest density of summer camps and campers in the state. Many young children, like mine, learn to swim on Lake Fairlee. Do we want to compromise their lives and lack of skill with turbulent waters?

The 2024 rule was created without considering safety! ANR acknowledged this, even as it created a 90-acre wake sport zone on our small lake where 4 of the 5 summer camps are located. The newly proposed rule takes safety into consideration. Thank you ANR!

I assume your comment is short enough to fit into the form's word limit, so I'd suggest you submit it on the form. There is a question on the form that asks if you support the rules. Please check off the choice that you support the rule changes, but wish they went further.

Increasing the minimum WSZ size to 100 acres and the distance from other lake users to 500 feet will protect more lakes and the public from large wave-making boats. This is good management.

There is deep community support for the proposed rule change. The select boards of Thetford, Fairlee, and West Fairlee, 2 local conservation commissions, the Lake Fairlee Association, and all camp leaders support the proposed rule change.

Wake sports do not belong on small lakes. They negatively impact all other users who have shared the lake for over a century. Do not compromise on safety.

Thank you for adopting the proposed rule as you drafted it, without modifications.

Lelia Mellen

Having spent much time on the lakes and ponds of the NEK, esp. in Greensboro and Glover, I have learned about the harms of high-speed watercraft to crumbling shorelines and to wildlife (e.g. loons) and have witnessed the dangers posed to swimmers. I also know that we must do more to minimize the transference of invasive species. I support the proposed changes, including those to

- update the language on how to delegate to municipalities, review and submit petitions, and inspect and decontaminate (or clean) watercraft;
- increase safety offsets between wakesports and other recreational users;
- revise the wakesports zone definition; and
- require hot water decontamination for wakeboats moving between water bodies.

Our lakes and ponds are for all, including the non-humans in them, not just thrill-seekers who, to judge by their behaviors, too often ignore others.

I own a home on Lake Raponda and am so glad we have a safer, healthier, more enjoyable lake now that we no longer have wakeboats allowed. Wake sports are fun and all, but they should only be allowed on super big and deep water areas. Honestly, I don't think our Vermont lakes are the location for wake sports. Please continue to protect our environment for everyone and expand rules to require very big, very deep water for wake boating. (I'm thinking like the Great Lakes - not our shallow and narrow lakes.).

We are working hard to preserve Lake Dunmore for future generations, including the water quality, the encouragement of loons, and the fragile lake shore. The residents around the lake have donated to create an endowment to fund water quality measures like milfoil eradication. They have applied for grants to study and mitigate phosphorus contamination. The disturbance of the lake bottom and the lake shore caused by wake sports threatens these measures.

Our lake is ideal for rowing and a number of people have taken up this sport. We enjoy the company of the loons and the herons on the lake in the morning. We have learned to get along with fishing boats by pausing when their wake goes by. The wake from a wake boat, however, would capsize or break a scull, which is longer and more fragile than a kayak. Even more scary is the possibility that the wake boater might not see the scull, which is close to the water, because of the tilt of their boat.

I support the DEC proposed changes to Wakesport rules, but feel they do not go far enough. I feel wakeboats should not be allowed on any of the inland lakes in the state of Vermont. They should only be allowed on Lake Champlain; our "great lake."

Please make the most stringent rules possible to protect VT lakes, aquatic health, wildlife, swimmers, kayakers, and children playing in shallow water. Once damage is done it cannot be undone... we do not need wake boats on small lakes, they really make a mess of our lake

Public Safety and Environmental concerns

For the life of me, I cannot understand why are we debating the presence of wake boats in our state, at all! There are so many downsides to their presence and the damage they can do to the lake environment, we are hard pressed to compare these awful environmental impacts to what their upside is. And the upside is essentially providing a "surfing experience" for a handful of boat owners that can afford a wake boat that cost \$50,000 and up. A single pass with a wake boat can cause devastating and permanent effects on a lake bottom. The idea that these boats can be regulated to the point that this is not going to occur is ridiculous. We have been overrun by the efforts of an industry that wants only to make money, by opening up our fair state to the national wake boat community, and damn the consequences on the amount environmental devastation. I urge a complete. reconsideration of this issue and a total ban of these boats throughout the state.

Respectfully,

Peter Shea, Burlington resident, outdoor writer, angler, canoeist, grandfather.

The "unnatural" waves and noise created by wakesports activities will effect the fragile shorelines and habitat with in the smaller lakes of Vermont. I strongly support the proposed modification with no further changes.

PLEASE support the 100 acre and 500 foot rule!!! Boater and swimmer safety along with shoreline erosion demands it.

I am an avid kayaker of a certain age. I am careful to go out only when the weather conditions are safe. What I can't safely predict is whether a wakeboat will come zooming by me sending up large rolling waves. I was out with a young friend last year who was a novice kayaker and she almost got swamped. It was so scary.

And if there are going to be wakeboats on a lake they should be required to stay farther away from the shore. I have a friend who was washed off her dock by the wake.

Wakeboats stir up the bottom of the lake and we have enough trouble controlling the bladderwort and milfoil.

I live on Lake Groton and have been a resident here for over 10 years. I support these stricter regulations for wake boats. While Lake Groton is already exempt, I believe that the enhanced rules are critical. The impact along the shoreline even when wake boats are 300'+ from shore has been significant here before the existing regulations were put in place. With the significant flooding we have experienced over the past three years, shorelines are already fragile and climate change is not going to make these challenges any easier for decades to come. I respect the sports related to the use of wake boats, but feel that their use should be confined to larger bodies of water where shoreland impact can be mitigated. Thank you!

The continued damage to my boat, slamming against my dock while it is docked by these big waves produced by the wake boats as well as the swamping of our kayaks out in the lake away from shore need to be stopped please.

We are very concerned about the introduction of invasive species such as milfoil into our lake, or any lake. These wake boats hold water in them which then circulates into the body of water they are on. We have seen many wake boats that have the driver who is looking at the person on the wakeboard and not really paying attention to what or who is in the water ahead of them.

We are VERY concerned about the erosion of our shorelines because of their large wakes.

We have been diligent about keeping our shoreline full of native plants to keep it from erosion but this is becoming a real struggle to hold our shoreline with the impact of boating in general. Most don't observe the rules of distance from shore. There are not enough enforcement officers to patrol the lakes and enforce the laws.

I commend ANR for proposing an increase of the wakesport operating setbacks from other lake users and loon nesting sites to 500'. While I still wholeheartedly believe human safety and wellbeing should outweigh that of all others (i.e., shorelines, fish, wildlife, their habitats, etc.), and deserve a setback far greater than 500', this proposed change at least places the setback in alignment with the current required operating distance from shore. When wakesport guidelines were first being introduced into UPW rules in 2024, safety to other lake users was a significant area of concern raised by many members of the public during the public hearing process, and echoed by legislators during the LCAR hearing process. This was acknowledged by ANR as an area that needed further consideration. I believe this addresses the concerns raised.

It's inevitable that the popularity of wakesports will increase in the coming years. This is predicted by those that manufacture wake boats, as well as those who sell them. In a statement issued by the Marine Retailers Association of America in October 2025, "Wake boats and wakesurfing, in particular, represent one of the fastest-growing segments of the recreational boating market, accounting for nearly 10% of all boat sales nationwide and generating approximately \$1.7 billion in 2024 alone." Based in this assessment, I believe that the interest in wakesports that Vermont is experiencing currently will pale in comparison to what we'll face in the not-to-distant future.

In 2024, LCAR members also anticipated an impending growth of wakesports in the state and cited the cumulative effect of multiple wake boats on a lake as another area of concern. You've addressed this by proposing an increase in the acreage for a wakesport zone to 100 and establishing a minimum length that appropriately accommodates acceleration, run length and deceleration for a moderately experienced wake surfer, as well as a reasonable run length for a wake boarder. Without question, lakes that now support one (or more) wake boats operating without controversy are likely to face significant conflicts, not to mention safety concerns, with the impending increase in the number of wakesport enthusiasts vying for space.

During the pre-rulemaking process, you clearly presented the amendments being contemplated, justified with these changes by providing objective, evidence-based data and actively solicited input

from all stakeholders. With the resulting proposed UPW rule changes, you are assuring that the rules related to wakesports can be administered within the state's existing infrastructure, satisfying the safety and cumulative use concerns raised by members of the public and state legislators, and addressing many of the issues brought by the ten most recent petitioners.

In my estimation, you've checked all the necessary boxes and I'm in support of the proposed amendments to the Use of Public Waters Rules as referenced above. I thank you for your efforts in protecting our lakes and their environs from further impairment and, above all, providing increased safety for all lake users.

Linda Alderton
Lake Parker
West Glover

I support the change in rules to a minimum 100-acre Wake Sports Zone and the 3,000-ft run. This would prohibit wake sports on Lake Parker, where we have a camp.

I take my grandchildren out on a little catamaran and wouldn't like for a sudden wave to hit the boat and make them topple overboard. Of course they wear life jackets, but it would be a memorably scary experience for them, and not easy in a little sailboat to haul them back onboard. Nor would we want the waves to knock them down when they are learning to swim. We want to build positive core memories for them around the water.

Our lake is shallow – 40 feet at its deepest point. For decades it was surrounded by dairy farms, which spread manure all year, and nutrients washed down into the lake. In 1974 when I moved to a farm down the road, I began swimming in the lake, which was murky and mucky.

Soon after that Lake Parker became the state's test lake to find out if building manure pits on farms in the watershed would prevent nutrients from running into the lake and causing algae blooms. The state and federal governments, as well as the dairy farmers spent a lot of money building manure pits.

It worked! Over the past 50 years the lake has become cleaner and clearer. It is great for swimming because it is shallow and warms faster than the deeper lakes.

The nitrogen and phosphorus from decades ago has precipitated to the bottom and been sealed over by more mud. I would hate for that long-buried sludge to be churned up by a wake boat veering out of the deep-water wake sports boundary area. That allowed wake sports zone would only be visible on a computer or cell phone screen AVENZA map, which the boat driver would have to look at while also steering the boat and watching the wake surfer. I don't believe that wake boats will stay strictly within the prescribed boundaries.

Lake Parker is enjoyed by many residents and visitors in kayaks, canoes, and small boats because it is quiet and peaceful. We don't mind the water skiers, the pontoon boats or the occasional speed boat. But wake boats would change the character of our lake and disturb other traditional watercraft and swimmers.

Please confirm the change to 100-acre Wake Sports Zone and 3,000-ft run to protect our small lakes, prevent erosion and churning up of past pollution, and preserve the enjoyment of our beautiful small Vermont lakes.

Sincerely,

Peggy Day Gibson - Lake Parker, West Glover

Allowing wakeboards in smaller bodies of water such as Waterbury Reservoir irreparably damages the shoreline and wildlife habitat. It also changes the character of a treasured recreational resource that generations of Vermont families regularly visit for lower-impact activities such as swimming, kayaking, fishing, camping and hiking. Please prohibit wakeboards in the reservoir to preserve this valuable resource for people and the environment!

We own lake front property in northern VT. Our concerns are that we worry about erosion of the shore line that wake boats could cause. We are very concerned about the cleanliness of boats entering and polluting the lake with unwanted vegetation. Another concern is the waves that wake boats create, which could be harmful to other boaters and kayakers, due to the smallness of the lake in Averill VT. We worry about the safety of children that use the lake for enjoyment. In addition we are concerned about other small lakes in Vermont for these same reasons.

Please increase the minimum depth requirement for wake surfing to 30 feet to reflect the recent scientific Terra Vigilis study which indicates disturbance to lake bottoms by wake sports to at least 26 feet, and employing the "Precautionary Principle"; we all know newer wake boats are providing larger and more powerful waves which cause disturbance of lake bottoms at greater depths, which release latent phosphorus which, in turn, negatively affects water quality. Thank you.

Increase the minimum wake sports zone to 11 acres with a 3000 foot run. Expand safety buffer from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users and water structures.

Many many thousands of people, including me, living in Vermont are working very hard and spending significant monies to reduce their carbon footprint. ANR's support for wake sports tosses all these efforts in the trash. Why?

The very few wake sports people have lots of money, to buy the boat, and ANR through lobbyists and political donations.

ANR is a shameful joke of an agency.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to increase the minimum lake size for wakesports from 50 to 100 contiguous acres. This change lacks a clear scientific basis and threatens to create the very environmental and safety issues the ANR is tasked with preventing.

Lack of Ecological Justification The move from 50 to 100 acres does not appear to be based on any documented ecological thresholds. The current 50-acre standard was finalized a year ago after an extensive rulemaking process that determined it was sufficient for safe and sustainable water use. To double this requirement now—without new, verified scientific data—suggests that this is a targeted restriction of a specific user group rather than an evidence-based environmental protection.

The Risk of Overpopulation and Congestion By eliminating access on smaller, approved lakes, the state will effectively force the entire wakesport community onto a much smaller number of water bodies. This overpopulation creates significant safety concerns, increases user conflict, and places a disproportionate ecological burden on the few lakes that remain open to us.

Increased Lake-to-Lake Travel Data from 2025 shows that out of 125 monitored boats, 108 stayed on their home lake for the entire summer. Only 17 traveled to different bodies of water. This high rate of "home lake" use is one of our best defenses against the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). By removing access to home lakes through a 100-acre minimum, the state is actively incentivizing more travel. This policy will force families to become transient boaters, increasing the frequency of trailering and the subsequent risk of AIS cross-contamination.

Upholding the Standard of Rulemaking Regulations must be data-driven, evenly applied, and based on demonstrated impact. This proposed change fails all three tests. It ignores the current success of the 50-acre rule and replaces it with an arbitrary number that compromises safety and environmental goals.

I urge the ANR to stand by its mission of balanced, science-based resource management and maintain the current 50-acre requirement.

Sincerely,

Katie

I appreciate the opportunity to submit public comment regarding the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments. After reviewing the proposed changes and the supporting materials, I am writing to express my opposition to the new requirements and my support for maintaining the 2024 rule as it was originally written.

The primary scientific sources cited in these proposals focus on how wakes attenuate over distance and depth. However, the proposed rules translate this science into regulatory thresholds that the research does not actually support. For example, the new 3,000-foot surf zone requirement is being introduced without a cited study showing why this specific distance is necessary. There is no industry standard that supports this number, and no modeling or Vermont-specific data has been shared to explain it. It is difficult to support a rule that lacks a clear, data-backed "why."

Similarly, the proposed increase from 50 acres to 100 acres lacks a scientific explanation. There is no data showing why 100 acres is safe while 60, 70, or 80 acres is not. This change disproportionately eliminates access to specific lakes that families have enjoyed for years, rather than addressing measured environmental impacts on those specific bodies of water.

I am also very concerned about the 500-foot safety buffer. Safety is a priority for everyone, but this requirement may actually create a serious concern. Most general boaters do not know what 500 feet looks like on the water, especially when many already struggle to accurately judge the current 250-foot distance. Without clear evidence that this change solves a proven safety issue, it feels like an unnecessary complication for everyone on the lake.

Furthermore, I disagree with the assertion that wakesports should be classified as a "non-normal use" simply because modern boats have evolved since 1993. Towed watersports behind inboard motorboats clearly predate 1993. Towboats and ballast-modification practices were in use well before that date, and wakesurfing itself emerged as a sport in the late 1980s. The law was intended to prevent entirely novel or incompatible uses, not to freeze technology at 1993 levels. Improved equipment within a longstanding recreational category does not create a new legal use.

Regarding sections 3.7 and 4.3, I oppose moving lake eligibility to administrative discretion. Any temporary suspension for research or management should be limited to one boating season, be based on documented necessity, and automatically expire unless renewed through formal rulemaking.

I truly believe that when we base our rules on valid data and demonstrated impacts, we create a system that everyone can respect. I urge the Agency to maintain the current 2024 rules—which were already a carefully negotiated limit—until real science can show a true need for change. Thank you for your time and for all you do to keep our lakes wonderful.

I am submitting this comment to express my extreme frustration with the proposed 3,000-foot run requirement. This entire proposal appears to be built on the scientifically hollow claim of wave superposition, a theory that ignores the basic laws of fluid dynamics. It is an established fact in hydrodynamic research that waves disperse and decay as they travel; they do not simply accumulate indefinitely like an ever-growing wall of water. Experts such as Macfarlane and Goudey have clearly demonstrated that these are transient wave packets, yet the Agency is acting as if these waves persist forever.

I have several direct questions that require immediate, data-backed answers before this rulemaking proceeds. First, what specific time-series data has the ANR collected that shows wake waves actually persist long enough to accumulate in any meaningful way? Second, did the ANR actually model wave interference patterns before deciding that a 3,000-foot run was a necessary threshold? Finally, where is the documented evidence of cumulative shoreline energy resulting from consecutive passes in a specific Vermont field study?

Without persistence data, any assumptions about cumulative wave energy are completely unsupported by science. It is insulting to the public to propose such restrictive measures based on theoretical assumptions that contradict existing research. Shoreline energy is a matter of physics, not guesswork. If the Agency cannot produce the modeling or the field data to prove that a 3,000-foot run is environmentally necessary to prevent wave accumulation, then this rule has no business being implemented. I strongly oppose these changes and urge the Agency to return to a process driven by actual evidence rather than unsubstantiated claims.

My wife and I are 20-year property owners and residents of Joe's Pond, 70 years old, and enjoy being on the water for boating and kayaking. We truly appreciate the work done by the DEC on the wakesports issue. We support the proposed rule of a required 3000 foot run, as well as a minimum of 100 acres to run a boat in wake mode. The safety buffer of 500 feet is just as important, speaking as one who has been "swamped" in a kayak on the lake. We sometimes like to kayak across the Pond, and no one can predict when a wakeboat will appear or go into "wake mode." I do not like the idea of my safety being dependent on someone else's judgment. One has to be unusually cautious when such a boat is even in view (and it's hard to tell them from other boats until they start creating a wake), as they move quickly and can be on you in a flash.

We would also support the adoption of the Responsible Wakes (RWVL) rule changes that increase the required minimum depth of operation from 20 to 30 feet, and create an even larger buffer distance (700 feet). This proposal would clearly state that wakesports are not a traditional use of public waters.

The Home Lake Rule, which is also meant to deal with the spread of invasives but is not yet practical, would be replaced in these recommendations by hot water decontamination, also important given our recent problems with Eurasian milfoil at the Pond; but neither solution is truly actionable.

We are pleased that the DEC is considering these proposed rule changes which promote the health of our treasured resources, and secures greater safety for traditional-use boaters and kayakers. Thank you for your efforts.

I support DEC's changes related to boater and swimmer safety, invasive species spread and shoreline erosion. I have owned a camp on Joe's Pond for almost 30 years and, since the advent of wake boats, have noticed more muck on my shoreline, the introduction of eurasian milfoil and have seen my grandchildren knocked over by large waves. I support recreational boating but Joe's Pond, as are many others, is too small to support wake boats. Our lakes are treasures that we need to protect so that future generations can share in the enjoyment we have been able to.

I am Treasurer of Camp Billings a children's camp on Lake Fairlee and support these changes.

There here are approximately 500+ children at four summer camps who use the lake extensively for boating, swimming, sailing, paddle boarding and water skiing. Safety of these children is paramount and preventing use of wake boats will greatly accomplish this.

Thank you.

I am writing to formally oppose the assertion that wakesports constitute a non-normal use of Vermont waters. This classification rests on a technological distinction rather than a legal one and misinterprets the history of recreation on our lakes. The relevant activity at issue is the recreational towing of watersports behind inboard motorboats, a category of use that was clearly established and present prior to 1993.

The history of boating shows that towboats, ski boats, and even ballast-modified inboards existed well before the 1993 benchmark. While equipment has certainly advanced, wakesurfing is simply a technological evolution of long-standing boating practices involving inboard vessels. The statute's intent was to prevent the introduction of entirely novel or incompatible activities, not to freeze recreational boating technology at 1993 levels. If the law were interpreted to mean that any improvement in equipment creates a new legal use, then modern advancements like GPS navigation, contemporary hull designs, and advanced fishing electronics would also be considered non-normal. Regulatory interpretation typically recognizes the evolution of equipment within an existing recreational category as a continuation of that use. Improved technology within a category like towed watersports does not convert it into a legally distinct or new activity. Wakesurfing developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a direct progression of existing tow sports, and the 2024 rule itself demonstrates the Agency's prior recognition that wakesports fall within the established spectrum of recreational boating. Defining wakesports as a non-normal use sets a dangerous and arbitrary precedent that penalizes innovation within long-standing recreational traditions. I urge the Agency to reject this definition and continue managing wakesports as an evolution of a historic and lawful use of Vermont's public waters.

I oppose the use of a Wake Boat on any freshwater lake less than 5000 acres due to the wildlife and lake shore effects. The proposed changes still allow some very important habitants to be affected. Safety and environmental issues are paramount.

While Vermont's lakes have long been a sanctuary for diverse recreational interests, the strength of our state's management has always rested on the promise of predictability and fairness. I am writing to express my deep concern that the proposal to increase the minimum lake size from 50 to 100 contiguous acres breaks that promise, replacing established compromise with an arbitrary new standard.

The shift from 50 to 100 acres does not appear to be based on any documented ecological thresholds or new environmental findings. The current 50-acre standard was just finalized after an exhaustive rulemaking process that determined it was sufficient for safe and sustainable use. To double this requirement now, without providing new, verified scientific data, creates the appearance of a targeted restriction against a specific use group rather than a move toward genuine environmental protection. By eliminating access on smaller, approved lakes, the state will effectively force the entire wakesport community onto a significantly smaller number of water bodies. This overpopulation creates serious safety concerns, increases the likelihood of user conflict, and places a disproportionate ecological burden on the few lakes that remain open.

Furthermore, data from 2025 highlights a critical trend: out of 125 monitored boats, 108 stayed on their home lake for the entire summer, while only 17 traveled to different bodies of water. This high rate of home-lake use is one of our best defenses against the spread of aquatic invasive species. By removing access to home lakes through a 100-acre minimum, the state is actively incentivizing more travel. This policy will force families to become transient boaters, increasing the frequency of trailering and the subsequent risk of cross-contamination between different bodies of water.

Regulations should be data-driven, evenly applied, and based on demonstrated impact. This proposed change fails to meet those standards. It ignores the current success of the 50-acre rule and replaces it with an arbitrary number that compromises both safety and environmental goals. I urge the Agency to maintain the current 50-acre requirement.

Lake Willoughby is my home lake. Its designation as a National Natural Landmark should merit special protection by the ANR/DEC.

The only way to prevent the spread of Aquatic Introduce Species (AIS) by wakeboats is to institute a Home Lake Rule and enforce certification of hot water decontamination for all wakeboats.

If the DEC doesn't have money to open up a new decontamination station and enforce certification with a sticker program, introduced AIS are inevitable by virtue of how wakeboats are designed.

That offers absolutely no protection of our most treasured natural resource. The ANR is responsible for oversight, management and protection of Vermont's natural environment, not enabling wakeboat owners through the least restrictive process.

If the costs of properly managing wakeboats are prohibitive, how will the ANR/DEC respond when AIS are spread throughout our inland lands?

Please consider our lakes as the treasures that they are and protect them for future generations.

When surf boats are present on a lake it makes impossible for those of us in smaller craft to boat safely. Last summer I had some small children with me in my canoe. Thank goodness we had life jackets because we were tossed out of the canoe by the wake. The use of these boats on Vermont lakes is not only dangerous to the lives of our children but also to the environment. It disrupts wildlife habitat, causes erosion of banks, stirs up sediment from the lake bed that can cause algae blooms, and they spread invasives. I would like to see a complete ban of these boats from all Vermont lakes.

The NEK has some of the most pristine lakes in Vermont. Leave them alone. They don't need wakesports and the water those boats carry from other lakes.

Hello — thank you for the opportunity to comment on the wakesports proposal. I care about Vermont lakes and I support reasonable rules that protect water quality, shorelines, and safety. However, I urge you not to adopt the proposal as written and to revise it before implementation. The proposed thresholds — 100 acres, 3,000 feet, and 500 feet — would likely remove eligibility across many lakes through mapping. If the agency has Vermont measurements supporting these exact thresholds, please publish them clearly and explain why these numbers were chosen.

Enforcement is also a concern: a fixed 500-foot buffer and 3,000-foot run length raise questions about how they will be measured on the water and enforced consistently in real conditions. On AIS, prevention should focus on universal drain/clean/dry compliance and inspection programs that apply to everyone. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you.

I am writing as someone who deeply values our state's waters and enjoys a wide range of lake activities—from paddleboarding and swimming to wakeboarding and wakesurfing. Wakesurfing has become a favorite for my family because it is slower, safer, and more relaxed than other tow sports, making it accessible for all ages.

I am asking you to maintain the current wakesports rules (50 contiguous acres, 20-foot depth, and 500 feet from shore). The proposal to double the minimum to 100 acres lacks the necessary evidentiary basis to justify such a significant restriction on public access.

The current 50-acre rule was rooted in science and collaborative input. In practice, because of its low operating speed (10–12 mph), wakesurfing does not dominate the lake or interfere with other users. I regularly see swimmers, paddlers, and boaters sharing the same water safely and respectfully under these standards.

Since these rules were finalized, there have been no documented trends of increased violations or formal complaints. This indicates that the current framework is effective. Arbitrarily increasing the minimum to 100 acres would unnecessarily eliminate access to many lakes and strip away opportunities for families to enjoy the water responsibly, without a proven ecological or safety-related need for the change.

The ANR's mission is to provide balanced, science-based management. Doubling the acreage requirement without new, verified data is an overcorrection that moves away from the goal of fair access for all. I urge you to uphold the existing 50-acre standard.

Thank you for your time and for considering my perspective.

As a passionate wakesurfer and responsible boat owner, I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed rules regarding wakesports in Vermont. After reviewing the proposal, it is clear that these regulations are based on misconceptions and pressure-driven advocacy rather than sound, verifiable science. Specifically, the move to increase the minimum lake size from 50 acres to 100 acres lacks any transparent justification. In any rulemaking process, particularly one that restricts public access to a shared resource, there must be a clear explanation of the "why." To date, the ANR has provided no explanation as to why 100 acres is a "safe" threshold while 40, 70, or 80 acres is not. Without a specific ecological or depth-related study to back this number, the 100-acre requirement appears to be an arbitrary figure chosen to simply reduce the number of available lakes.

This change does not address measured impacts; instead, it disproportionately eliminates specific lakes that were already vetted and approved under the 2024 rules. If the goal is environmental protection, the focus should remain on water depth and distance from shore—factors that actually dictate wave energy dissipation—rather than a total acreage number that has no proven correlation with shoreline health.

Furthermore, by stripping access from smaller lakes, the ANR is ignoring the practical consequences of its policy. You are taking "home-lake" boaters—who are currently our best defense against the spread of invasive species because they do not travel—and forcing them to become transient users. Forcing families to trailer their boats to a shrinking list of larger, over-congested lakes is a recipe for increased user conflict and higher environmental risk.

I urge you to reject the 100-acre proposal and maintain the current standards, which were only just implemented and have not been proven insufficient.

We should be managing our waters based on facts, not based on which interest group is the loudest.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I strongly oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates. I feel strongly these new proposals not only will not solve the problem, but will also create new problems such as a reduced home values and the start of gross over stepping.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates.

I support the DEC's changes in response to my concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion.

I am deeply concerned about the environmental impacts on our lakes! Not just our lakes but our streams too. I'm not just concerned about shoreline erosion but also the underwater ecosystem that gets destroyed by the boats! Safety is also a big concern for me as a small craft no motor boater.

As a member of the Board of Directors, alumni, and current parent of Camp Billings campers, I strongly support the DEC's proposed rule changes. The proposed guidelines are paramount to camper safety.

As a boater who cares deeply about the long-term health of our watershed, I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed expansion of wakesport restrictions from 50 to 100 acres. My concern is that these changes do not address the actual ecological risks facing our lakes, but instead create new ones by forcing boaters to become more mobile.

The move to 100 acres appears to be an arbitrary figure rather than one rooted in specific ecological thresholds. We have seen no data explaining why 100 acres provides a "safety zone" that 60 or 80 acres does not. By closing off smaller, previously approved lakes, the state is effectively ending the "home-lake" lifestyle for over 100 families who, according to 2025 data, kept their boats on a single body of water all summer.

When you remove access to a home lake, you force those boaters to travel. This is where the real environmental risk lies. Currently, Vermont does not have a comprehensive or effective network of decontamination stations at our boat launches. Moving boats from lake to lake without the infrastructure to ensure they are clean, drained, and dry is a direct threat to the health of our waters. We should be encouraging boaters to stay on their home lakes to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, yet this rule does the exact opposite.

Regulations must be data-driven and based on demonstrated impact. Shifting the goalposts after only one year of the current 50-acre rule—without any evidence that it has failed—undermines the public's trust in the rulemaking process. It suggests a policy driven by social pressure rather than environmental science.

I urge the Agency to focus on the real threats to our lakes, such as improving decontamination infrastructure for all watercraft, rather than implementing restrictive acreage requirements that lack a scientific basis and encourage the very cross-contamination we are trying to avoid.

I believe wakesports adversely impact the ecological and standing recreational use and status of the Waterbury Reservoir.

I have found three consistent devastating outcomes caused by wakesports:

- 1) Immediate ecosystem devastation caused by one pass of a wake boat - multiple passes causing permanent damage to shorelines, water quality and reservoir bottoms. "Boat generated waves are discrete events and if they exceed the local erosion thresholds, they will result in erosion. If this occurs repeatedly, the shoreline will become dynamically unstable and continue to erode." Macfarlane 2019 Ultimately having an adverse impact on watersheds, wildlife and their respective habitats. Bauer et al., 2002 Alexander & Wigart, 2013; Baud-Bovy & Lawson, 1977; Goudey & Associates, 2015; Houser et al., 2021; Marr et al., 2022; Ray, 2020; Roberts et al., 2019; Ruprecht et al., 2015, Marr, 2022
- 2) Increased potential for invasive species introduction - water ballast construction allows for up to 8 gallons of residual water to remain after each use with no ability to visually inspect. Doll, 2018; Campbell et al., 2016
- 3) Safety concerns due to the size, height and turbulence of waves generated by wake boats can destabilize swimmers and other recreational vessels - kayaks, canoes, SUPs

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates.

As a family deeply involved in wakesurfing, I've seen firsthand how this sport brings people together across generations. When done responsibly—following no-wake zones, proper ballast management, shoreline setbacks, and invasive species protocols—its ecological impact is limited and manageable. Wakesurfing keeps families active, outdoors, and connected, giving kids and teens a healthy alternative to screens while fostering respect for our lakes and waterways. Thoughtful regulation should focus on responsible use and education rather than broad restrictions that lack clear, lake-specific scientific support.

I support proposed regulatory changes to restrict wake boats in more Vermont waters. I oppose more wake boating for reasons of boater safety, spread of ballast-borne invasive species, and shoreline and bottom damage. These harms are already well-documented. I do not trust wake boat owners to self-police and consistently decontaminate. We have already seen confrontations at launch ramps. Access to hot water to clean tanks is limited. The huge wakes are obnoxious to other lake users and dangerous to small boats.

This is a very destructive sport and should not be allowed to destroy the lakes!

We've owned our camp(s) on Joe's Pond for 25 years. Until Wake Boats started showing up we did not have a Milfoil problem. Now we do. I'm sure it's from ballast contamination from other bodies of water since it's impossible to completely empty the ballast. I know this because our son owns a wake boat but it's on a 7000 acre lake in NH. Please save Joe's Pond (hopefully we can succeed in eradicating the current infestation) by enacting the proposed regulations.

I believe that wake boats should be banned from all the lakes, rivers, and reservoirs under Vermont rules. nevertheless this improvement to the rules is a step in the right direction.

- I Oppose the 100-Acre Minimum Lake Size

Lake acreage is a mathematical measurement, not an indicator of environmental response. Wake energy and wave behavior do not change simply because a lake exceeds a certain surface size. This threshold functions as a policy tool to eliminate lakes by definition, not science.

- o 50 continuous acres is satisfactory Responsible wakes clearly outlines a Justification for a 60 contiguous acre Wake Sport Zone. Their exact quote “To address these concerns, we propose the creation of a 60-contiguous acre minimum Wake Sport Zone, which would provide adequate space for the operation of wake boats while allowing other traditional lake activities to continue. The 60-contiguous acre minimum Wake Sport Zone requirement would also simplify compliance and enforcement, since larger areas are easier to distinguish.”

- I Oppose the 3,000-Foot Straight Run Requirement

There is no scientific or environmental research establishing 3,000 feet as necessary for environmental protection. This figure reflects typical ride patterns and geometry, not hydrodynamic or shoreline impact data. Many of us do not need this 3000 feet to wakesurf, we use way less.

- I Oppose the 500-Foot Buffer from “Any Object” in a Wake Zone

Wake studies focus on shoreline wave attenuation — not 360° “object exclusion” zones. Vermont already operates under a 200-foot safety framework. This proposal creates a moving exclusion bubble that makes lawful operation extremely difficult and impractical.

- I Oppose Labeling Wakesports as a “Non-Normal Use”

The State of Vermont regulated the use of public waters with the intent to allow ALL Vermonters and visitors to use these shared resources in a reasonable manner.

Towed watersports have long been in existence. The evolution of boat technology does not make the activity itself a “new” use. Wakesurfing represents a modern evolution of long-standing recreational boating practices.

- I Oppose Section 3.7 – Lake Management / Research Provision

This section creates a pathway where an already-approved lake could be restricted under a “management” or “research” designation without a clearly defined reinstatement timeline.

Without clear criteria, study parameters, and a set reinstatement schedule, this functions as an indefinite access suspension mechanism rather than a transparent research process.

- Vermont Boater Education- Regulatory implementation and accountability concerns. Before adding additional restrictions, the state must ensure existing rules are fully implemented, communicated and incorporated into official boater education and enforcement training. Regulatory expansion without proper education undermines compliance, fairness, legal implementation and public trust.

We are fortunate enough to have a camp on Peacham Pond, which was the fulfillment of a dream of many many decades. I love to swim in the early morning or even afternoon. There are already power boats on the pond creating waves that can make swimming difficult: wake boats will make it impossible. I am not alone. There are other swimmers, people who fish, many kayakers and canoers. Permitting wake boats on the pond will destroy these activities and have a disastrous effect on shorelines and the fragile ecosystem. Peacham Pond is just not large enough to absorb wakesports. I urge you to adopt the new regulations which will expand safety buffers and increase the wakesports zone to 100 acres.

Thank you.

Where does it end! Jetskis,ski boats,etc... Is there any proof that the spread of milfoil is tied To the wake boats as it's very clear

On our lake the introduction and spread of milfoil was tied to boats external to the lake coming in and introducing milfoil as the milfoil was introduced and spread before any wakeboats were introduced.

February 11, 2026

I strongly support DEC's proposed water rules regulating wake boats but do not think they go far enough. I support a science-based 700' operating distance, a 100-acre wake sport zone with a 3000' run and minimum water depth of 30'.

I have observed and experienced 3 resident wake boats on Salem Lake over the past 4-5 years. The effects of these boats on the lake's surface, shoreline, and ambiance are far greater than anything else on the lake. For safety reasons, my family avoids using all watercraft when these boats are present as very large waves linger well after a wake boat and its sounds have left an area. Uncomfortably loud music is frequently heard from these boats.

I am the public boat access Greeter Coordinator for our lake. One of our Greeters witnessed a SUPB user getting knocked off of their paddle board by a wake boat wave - the boat operator apparently oblivious to the event. Another time, a normally quiet regular who fishes on the lake with a 14' flat-bottom boat volunteered he had no kind words for wake boats.

Salem lake often requires navigating well away from shore to avoid weed beds. Under these circumstances, 500' simply does not provide adequate distance to avoid large wakes during peak summer weed growth and boat activity. Again, I favor a greater distance, and even better, increased distance with a moratorium on wake boats on inland lakes and ponds until adequate AIS wash stations are in place, unless a home lake rule is in place and enforced.

Thanks for this opportunity.

EW

Wakesports, Should not be allowed within 1,000 + feet from any shoreline as to protect these shorelines from unecessary erosion, Also it is a safety issue for people using small craft within a 1,000 foot buffer, no place for these boats on small water bodies

I live at the west end of Lake Fairlee. My bank is eroding by the waves caused by wake boats.

We are senior citizens who still enjoy a canoe ride. But we were almost toppled over a few times by the waves caused by the wake boats.

Our lake is too small and narrow to escape from the actions of the wake boat waves.

I wish that new laws would prohibit wake boats on Lake Fairlee.

Our pontoon boat was rocked back and forth dangerously by wake boats on Lake Fairlee.

My wife and I got soaked.

Have a 13' aluminum boat with a 90# HP motor. This past summer the stern attachment flange to the hull began leaking. I'm convinced it was caused by the waves from the wake boats' waves resulting in the SLAMMING of the boat fore and aft leading to the loosening of the riveted flange . I set a buoy out for safety at 200' at Lake Morey and see very little difference in the amplitude and speed of said unnatural weeds.

I like on lake Willoughby and we get significant wave action even from typical boats which erodes my shore on a regular basic and the wake boats will have a far bigger wake. I also kayak almost every day weather permitting. We can observe where the loons nest and they are very low to the water and will certainly be effected.

Thank you

Subject: Wakesports, enough rules

I am writing as someone who enjoys spending time on the Lake. I want to express my opposition to the proposed 3,000-foot straight-run requirement for wakesports and the new restrictive 100-continuous-acre minimum.

The explanation for the 3,000-foot number is based on the assumption that wakeboats typically travel 10–12 mph for about three minutes. However, this describes assumed boat behavior, not measured environmental impact. In reality, when we do watersports, we travel around 9 miles per hour for less than 3 minutes, which equals about approx 2,000 feet—not 3,000. Setting a fixed length requirement like this is not based on science; it is simply an estimate that does not reflect actual usage.

The current 50-continuous-acre minimum Wake Sport Zone works well. It provides enough space for the safe operation of wakeboats while allowing other lake activities to continue without conflict. I strongly believe that everyone should be able to use the waters as recreation evolves, and the existing 50-acre standard already supports this balance.

Please keep the current Wake Sport Zone requirements in place.

My family has a house on Lake Fairlee, and I'm writing because I'm opposed to the new proposed restrictions on wakesports, AGAIN. My family has loved being on this lake for years, and it doesn't seem fair that a small group could spread stories and restrict an activity that we and others enjoy responsibly. Restricting access to public waters is not fair. Everyone should be able to use the lake as recreation evolves. On Lake Fairlee, wakeboats are a very small part of the lake only about 0.03% of all boats. In my lifetime, there have only ever been two wakeboats on the lake, and I don't expect that to change. I also want to mention the summer camps on the lake. They have four boats that they use almost nonstop all summer, and yet we all coexist. Everyone gets to use the lake safely, and no one complains. In fact, many people have more issues with the camp boats than with the wakeboats. We all share the lake, and it works really well when people are responsible and respectful.

Please don't make rule changes that punish such a small number of people or stop us from enjoying the lake. The current rules already allow everyone to coexist safely, and that's what makes Lake Fairlee special.

I live on Salem Lake in Derby, VT. I believe there are three wakeboats that regularly use the lake. They all seem to be following the 500' from shore rule. Even with that buffer, the waves arriving at the shoreline are very strong. We do have to make sure my 3 year old twin grandsons are not overwhelmed by the waves. I feel these users should still be allowed to use their wakeboats on Lake Salem

I want to voice my support for the proposed updated wakesport zone definition of 100 contiguous acres. I've heard that there have been discussions and/or counter-proposals to reduce to 90 acres, which would target a small group of lakes including Lake Fairlee. Lake Fairlee's current wakesports zone as of 2025 is also a hub for non-motorized lake activities by 4 nearby camp programs, and the public boat launch. Even at this widest part of the lake, it's still relatively small and not suitable for coexisting with wakesports vehicles. The issue presented by wakesport vehicles on lake of this size is that their wakes are large and powerful enough to travel to each shore easily, meaning that the wakesport zone's impact is not limited to the wakesport zone itself. There's also some simple math to be done here: the number of wakesport users on Lake Fairlee is dwarfed by the number of canoes, kayaks, sailboats, paddleboards and unassisted swimmers that go out on the lake daily. At the program I am affiliated with, over 500 campers and staff use the lake each summer. I'm sure the other 3 programs around the western section of the lake contribute similar numbers. I'm certain that nowhere near the same number of wakesport users visit the lake each summer, yet they have a more profound impact when they do visit. One single wakesport vehicle can disrupt every other lakegoer, potentially to the point of leaving the lake or not going out at all, because the wakes they cause can harm the balance and experience of smaller, personal watercraft, especially for children. For these camp programs, that is a nearly existential threat. I believe in the missions of summer camps and the impacts they have on children. If they cannot confidently explore the lake because a wakesport vehicle is disrupting the wakesport zone and beyond, then the priorities of this policy are misaligned with the priorities of the majority of citizens it is intended to serve. Thankfully, the proposed 100 contiguous acre definition does align with these priorities, and it should be upheld, very least as a minimum in the final revision of this season's public use rules. While this policy reduces the number of wakesport permitted lakes, quantity is not nearly as important as quality in this matter. Disruptive activities should be reserved for lakes with the size to accommodate them, and lakes of Lake Fairlee's size and smaller cannot accommodate while maintaining a high quality environment for other activities.

I STRONGLY support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. This is affecting our family Willoughby Lake waterfront property, and that of our neighbors. Boat wakes are dangerously disturbing calm water swimmers, canoe's and kayak's. They have also cause damage to our boathouse and swim dock.

I am concerned with the size of boats located on Peacham Pond. I am a camp owner and over the years with the increased number of boats, power of motors, and wakes from these boats has caused land erosion along the shoreline. I'd like to see the rules change for the size of the boats permitted on these waters, along with the speed and distance from shorelines.

When I started at Peacham Pond in 1964 there were fewer camps, only a handful of motorboats and a very peaceful pond. It has changed over the years and allowing wakeboard motorboats would disturb the peacefulness of this pond along with the water equality and environment.

Please do NOT allow these boats to destroy our ponds.

Please keep out small lakes quiet and peaceful.

I am concerned about the safety and environmental effects of wakeboats.

I support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because I want the Waterbury Reservoir to be a peaceful place for my family, friends, and wildlife. Motorized traffic makes a major outsized impact for a small number of users and I would like to reduce or eliminate motorized traffic on the Waterbury Reservoir.

Very concerned that wakeboat rules allow for disruption of other species, including loons, on our lakes, allow for the importing of invasive species (especially on lakes like Caspian that have worked hard successfully to keep them out), and disrupt use, enjoyment and safety for the many to please the very few. This should only be allowed in specified areas of Lake Champlain and maybe Memphremagog, if anywhere at all.

To the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

My name is Gennette Carr. This will be my third testimony to the DEC regarding the changes being considered to the Use of Public Waters Rule, particularly those affecting wake sports on inland lakes. I submit this testimony as a lifelong resident of Vermont, a homeowner on Great Averill Lake and the treasurer of Averill Lakes Association.

While the State has taken into consideration some of the safety concerns raised in previous public hearings it has failed to address the most sensitive issue of protecting our lakes from the spread of aquatic Invasive species.

Our Association has always been and continues to be a strong advocate for responsible stewardship of our lakes and surrounding environment. We conduct water testing and monitor inlets on both lakes (our oligotrophic lakes both qualify for Class A1 status based on the samples gathered by our lay monitoring program analyzed by Mark Mitchell), we organize and operate part-time greeter programs on both lakes, have earned Gold Lake Wise designations, are currently working in tandem with the State on a Lake Watershed Action Plan and promote these conservation issues to our membership and all stakeholders in our watershed. We have worked with Vermont and Quebec public service organizations (the Averills are headwaters for Hydro-Coaticook) to limit water level fluctuations to protect shorelines. We petitioned the DEC (and won) to have jet skis prohibited on both lakes. Our efforts have kept our lakes clean and free of invasive species.

Now, Little and Great Averill Lakes are 2 of the 10 lakes located in the Northeast Kingdom that are among the 18 inland lakes deemed eligible for wake sports per the DEC proposed changes. Without stronger protections in place our lakes are threatened by AIS. The DEC's proposed removal of the home lake rule and proof of decontamination cripples our efforts to preserve the pristine water quality of our lakes. These omissions from the rule also abdicate DEC's responsibility imbedded in V.S.A §1424 to preserve, enhance, restore and conserve Vermont's natural resources for current and future generations.

The inability for wake boats to completely empty their ballast tanks/bags puts them in violation of Vermont's AIS laws and regulations. Therefore, I respectfully request that the state reinstate the home lake rules and proof of contamination until such time as:

1. The multi-million dollar wake boat industry design and manufacture these boats so that they are easily and completely able to empty their ballast tanks/bags.
2. Adequate decontamination stations are manned and operable at convenient locations at public boat launches.
3. Provide adequate enforcement of compliance to the rules

Respectfully.

Gennette Carr

As a swimmer who enjoys the many peaceful lakes of our state, I fully endorse the proposed wakeboarding restrictions.

I am a camp owner on Peacham Pond in Peacham, Vermont. Our waterbody is approx. 350 acres with an EXISTING wake sports zone of approx. 90 acres.

If the proposed new rules are passed, our pond would not support a wake sport zone and we would be free of both the environmental and safety concerns. That would be a wonderful outcome for our pond community and for the health of our pond. So we FULLY SUPPORT the new rules as written.

However, as wake sports grow in popularity and wake boats get bigger and more powerful, I would plead with the DEC to write and enforce even stricter rules for our lakes and ponds.

Normal use of most Vermont lakes include many swimmers, kayakers, paddle boarders, anglers, water skiers and others requiring relatively un-disrupted water. One wake boat can challenge the safety of all those users. One type of use (wake sports) should not be able to deny others types of use to coexist.

This can easily happen when wake sports are being performed.

In addition, science is still testing the impacts of bottom scouring, wake-wave erosion and plant and animal disruption that wake boats cause when in full ballast mode. I hope this data will guide the DEC to protect our lakes and ponds at the highest level for our use and for future generations.

I support the DEC's changes, which will promote the safety of boaters and swimmers and help alleviate shoreline erosion.

There is a clear preference being presented to ban motorized activities in favor of newer activities which fall under the non-normal use rule. Prioritize one groups activities over another as these lands and lakes does not fit in with the ideals presented of use of theses lands and water for all to access.

Lake Health / Wildlife - In the past 20 years LW lake clarity has improved as well as a decrease in Evasive species. This includes an increase in wildlife.

I have been listening to these proceedings and there is a lot of focus on the "What if"

mis-information presented as well as a misunderstanding of boating and their operation, there has been a focus on the "What if".

These natural areas should have access to all without prejudice .

Wind Waves Waves on LW commonly reach over a foot more than any wake boat would reach the shores.

Please revise the proposed wakesports rule changes. The 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer would significantly restrict access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. AIS prevention should be addressed through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. I'm asking this not just as a boater, but as someone who grew up on Vermont lakes. My family has owned a wake boat since before I was born and we've never had issues with safety or environmental harm. Wake boats have been part of my life for as long as I can remember. I learned to wakesurf, wakeboard, and waterski here, and I'm now part of the waterski and wakeboarding club. These proposed rules would take away access to the very places where I grew up learning these sports. Instead of creating broad restrictions, please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make targeted, evidence-based changes.

As a frequent user of Vermont's public waters and a supporter of balanced lake management, I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed 2025 wake sport amendments. I believe the State is moving toward restrictive new policies without first fulfilling its basic responsibility to educate the public on the rules already in place.

My primary concern involves regulatory accountability and education. Before the Agency even considers additional restrictions, it must ensure that the existing 2024 rules are fully implemented, communicated to the public, and incorporated into official boater education and enforcement training. Expanding regulations when the current framework has not yet been properly socialized or taught to the average boater undermines the fairness of our laws. Regulatory expansion without a foundation of education does not protect the environment; it only creates confusion and diminishes public trust. The proposed increase from a 50-acre to a 100-acre minimum is a clear example of a policy that lacks a scientific "why." There has been no data shared to explain why 100 acres is a necessary threshold, while 60 or 80 acres is not. This change seems designed to eliminate access on specific lakes by definition rather than by addressing measured environmental impacts.

I am also troubled by the proposal to redefine wakesports as a non-normal use. Towed water-sports using inboard motorboats have been a common sight on Vermont lakes since long before the 1993 benchmark. The fact that hull designs and ballast systems have improved does not change the fundamental nature of the activity. It is a technological evolution of a longstanding recreational category, not a new class of water use. If we begin to classify any activity with updated technology as "non-normal," nearly every modern boat on the water would eventually face similar scrutiny.

Furthermore, I have serious practical concerns about the 500-foot safety buffer. Safety is a shared priority, but a rule is only effective if it can be followed. Most boaters already find it difficult to accurately judge 250 feet on open water. Doubling that distance to 500 feet—nearly the length of two football fields—without a clear, data-backed safety justification will lead to unintentional violations and unnecessary conflict between neighbors.

Finally, regarding the administrative authority to suspend lake eligibility for management projects, I request that the rule be revised to include strict oversight. Any suspension should be limited to one boating season and must automatically expire unless it undergoes a full public rule making process. Administrative discretion should never be used as a de facto path to permanent exclusion.

I urge the Agency to maintain the current 2024 standards and focus on improving its education and infrastructure efforts rather than imposing more unsupported restrictions.

Jenny and Laura,

I am writing to you today to ask you to reflect on our time together on Lake Fairlee. You stood on those shores with me at the identified points of concern near the camps, and in that moment, you did not see a significant difference in wave energy between a wakeboat under ballast and any other boat passing closer to shore.

The dramatic stories being told of children being tossed off floating docks are not the fault of wakeboats. In fact, it is entirely possible that a wakeboat in wakesport operation wasn't even involved in those incidents. A boat towing a tuber while traveling in circles creates compounded wakes that are often far more disruptive, as does a standard bowrider coming too close to the shoreline. To directly identify the wakeboat as the primary problem on Lake Fairlee is inaccurate and, frankly, feels like a fabricated narrative.

You sat in our small boat with me. You felt the waves, and you saw exactly how the water moves. I am asking you to go back to your recordings and your memories of that day. Please take into consideration what you actually experienced firsthand, rather than the malicious stories that are being circulated. The camps and their swimming areas are safe. I would never want to put anyone in harm's way (child or adult). Being a safe boater is something I take very seriously; I am a former certified lifeguard, and I have never forgotten the weight of that responsibility. I carry that same commitment to safety every

time I am behind the wheel of my boat.

Please, keep the rules as they are. They are working. Thank you, Emily

I own property on Lake Morey. Every time a wake boat passes my dock I watch the shoreline further erode. The shoreline on the east side of Lake Morey is already badly eroded and the continued damage that wakeboats produce is unacceptable. The destruction of the shoreline for the pleasure of a few people seems very much out of balance. I implore you to save our shoreline and ban wake sports in Lake Morey.

I strongly believe that wakesports are fundamentally incompatible with the peaceful and safe enjoyment of Vermont's inland lakes by the vast majority of the population. I further strongly believe that wakesports present an unacceptable risk of transmitting AIS to our inland lakes and thereby endangering both the lake environment and the present and future enjoyment of Vermont's pristine lakes, especially in the Northeast Kingdom. Therefore, I urge the DEC to go beyond the present proposed rules and to adopt a state-wide ban on wakeboats (or, alternatively, on wakesports) in Vermont's inland lakes.

With respect to the latest proposed rules, I support increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres with a 3,000 foot run. Further, I support expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures. These protections are vitally important in order to minimize the risks associated with wakeboats operating in precious lake assets such as Willoughby Lake, where I reside part of the year and where my family's history goes back over 100 years.

I have grave concerns about the feasibility and efficacy of the DEC's plans to replace the "Home Lake Rule" with hot water decontamination methods. The funding, infrastructure, space and skill to make decontamination a realistic alternative to the Home Lake Rule are unfortunately lacking. At Willoughby Lake, for example, decontamination stations (and the people and money to operate them) are completely impractical---they would not work and no reasonable person would expect them to succeed. Moreover, the time and expense that would be required (theoretically) to make decontamination an effective means of preventing the spread of AIS are exorbitant. A simple Home Lake Rule is a far better regulatory alternative. We don't have the luxury of time, given the immediate and potent threat that wakeboats pose to the environment through their ballast tanks. I strongly urge the DEC to reconsider its position and adopt the Home Lake Rule.

From the vantage point of my terrace overlooking Willoughby Lake, I have personally witnessed the enormous waves generated by wakeboats operating in wakesports mode. I have seen these waves slam into kayaks and our dock with great violence and turbulence. They are clearly a threat to swimmers, kayakers, other boaters, and even to people standing on their docks on their own property. I have not felt comfortable going swimming or kayaking when I see wakeboats out on Willoughby Lake, and I have heard many other residents say the same thing---these boats are dangerous and they are plainly at odds with normal, traditional uses of the Lake. In my experience, wakeboats operating in wakesports mode have adversely affected my use and enjoyment of Willoughby Lake. As more and more of these boats come to our pristine waters, the greater that adverse impact will be, and the greater the risk that our Lake waters will suffer irretrievable damage from uncontrollable AIS.

Comment in Support of DEC Wakesports Rule Changes – Lake Fairlee (Camp Billings)

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, families, and—most importantly—the campers of Camp Billings, a nonprofit, ACA-accredited overnight summer camp that has operated continuously on the shores of Lake Fairlee since 1906.

Lake Fairlee is central to Camp Billings' daily waterfront programming. Each summer, hundreds of campers—many between the ages of 8 and 15, including novice swimmers and first-time paddlers—use the lake for swimming instruction, canoeing, sailing, kayaking, and supervised free swim. These activities depend on predictable, calm water conditions and safe access to the shoreline.

Camp Billings' primary waterfront is located along a particularly exposed stretch of the lake, where wakes travel unobstructed and reach shore with full force. This exposure significantly amplifies the impact of large wake-generated waves and leaves little margin for error for children, swimmers, and small craft.

Camp Billings uses its waterfront from early morning through the evening. Campers and staff are often on the water at or before breakfast for supervised swims and instructional activities, and we regularly hold evening programs on or near the waterfront after dinner. As a result, allowing one wake boat at a time or time-of-day restrictions on wake-enhanced boating would not meaningfully reduce safety risks, as children and staff are present on and near the water throughout the day.

Although wakesports-related regulations were introduced in 2024, they have not proven sufficient to address the risks to Camp Billings campers. On Camp Billings' waterfront, campers have been knocked off both our swimming docks and floating aquatic equipment by large wakes, as recently as the summer of 2025, demonstrating that current safeguards do not adequately protect those in our care. Wake boats and wake-enhanced sports are therefore fundamentally incompatible with Lake Fairlee's youth-centered, instructional use. The large wakes they generate create unpredictable conditions that pose heightened risks for children, swimmers, and lightweight watercraft on a small, narrow lake.

Lake Fairlee is home to multiple long-established youth camps whose primary summer use of the lake is continuous, supervised, and instructional, involving hundreds of children on the water each day. This concentration of youth programming makes Lake Fairlee uniquely incompatible with wake-enhanced boating.

In addition, Camp Billings is intentionally structured as an affordable camp, with tuition lower than approximately 75% of peer overnight camps. Because we rely almost exclusively on camper tuition to operate, families' confidence in waterfront safety and the quality of the lake experience directly affects our ability to fully enroll and remain accessible to middle-income Vermont families.

For these reasons, Camp Billings strongly supports the DEC's proposed wakesports rule changes, specifically, increasing the minimum wakesports safety zone to 100 acres, which will result in prohibiting wakesports on Lake Fairlee, and the expanded 500-foot safety buffer between wakesports and other lake users, which will help increase safety on Lake Fairlee and other Vermont lakes still allowing wakesports.

Additionally, we urge DEC to strengthen the proposal further by adopting the RWVL-recommended rule changes that would increase the safe area from shore and other users to 700 feet and the required wakesports zone depth to the more environmentally protective 30 feet.

We respectfully urge the DEC to act quickly to adopt the proposed rules for this summer's camping season to protect children and preserve Lake Fairlee as a safe, shared resource.

Respectfully,

Yutaka Tamura

Executive Director Elect, Camp Billings
Lake Fairlee, Fairlee, Vermont
campbillings.org

While AIS prevention is important, the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you.

We support the DEC's changes concerning boater safety and shoreline erosion. The wakes have caused erosion around and behind my bulk head. Joe's Pond is too small to allow wake boats on it. The permissible area for wake boats is very limited. Their wakes are too destructive to the shore line and the pond's bottom. They will cause the process of eutrophication to speed up. As an example, the little beach where our children/grandchildren used to play is no longer there. I have seen the results of the wakes slam into my shore and pull out the material which makes up the shore line. Under the current limitations, this has occurred much too often. Therefore, we recommend that the wake boats not be allowed on Joe's Pond. Joe's Pond is too small to allow wake boats on it. The permissible area for wake boats is very limited. The minimum wakesport zone should be 100 acres with a 3,000' run, and expanding the buffer zone from 200' to 500'. Therefore, we recommend that the wake boats not be allowed on Joe's Pond.

I do not feel this proposed rule changes support wake surfing on smaller lakes, all it does is force wake boats closer to everyone else, which would only lead to accidents.

I strongly oppose the proposed wakeboat rule. This rule unfairly targets one specific group of recreational lake users without clear, conclusive evidence that wakeboats uniquely cause environmental harm beyond what already exists from other motorized boating activities. Singling out wakesports sets a bad precedent and feels more like a reaction to complaints than a policy based on balanced, science-driven decision-making.

Wakeboats are already regulated through speed limits, shoreline distance requirements, and existing environmental protections. Responsible wakeboat owners invest heavily in their equipment, follow boating laws, and care about the lakes they use. Many local families, small businesses, marinas, and tourism-related operations rely on wakesports as part of their livelihood. Restrictive rules will have real economic consequences for communities around Vermont lakes.

If the concern is shoreline erosion, invasive species spread, or water quality, those are broader issues tied to all types of motorized watercraft, stormwater runoff, septic systems, and shoreline development. A rule that disproportionately impacts wakeboats ignores these larger contributors and places blame on a single activity without addressing the full scope of the problem.

Instead of imposing broad restrictions or de facto bans, the state should invest in:

- Better education for all boaters on responsible operation and lake stewardship
- Clear enforcement of existing boating and environmental laws
- Lake-specific management plans based on actual data and lake characteristics
- Ongoing, transparent research that compares impacts across all boating activities

Vermont's lakes should remain accessible for diverse recreational uses. Policy should balance environmental protection with fair access, personal responsibility, and the economic realities of lake communities. I urge the agency to reject this rule in its current form and work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop solutions that are evidence-based, proportional, and equitable.

jhsmd121@gmail.com. Environmental protection must be our first priority. Preserving the peace and beauty of nature in this time of environmental degradation is vital. Wake sports are inherently selfish. They are noisy, polluting, and impede the enjoyment of the pristine outdoors. They also lead to habitat destruction which is becoming a greater and graver threat. Stop wakesports on our beautiful Waterbury Reservoir

The changes that the DEC is proposing are a huge step in the right direction--thank you for revisiting this topic--but they don't go far enough. The question that needs to be asked is: do you believe wake boats pose a threat to lakes? Do you believe that, either by scouring the bottom, thereby releasing stored phosphorous and ripping up native/invasive plants, or by introducing AIS via their ballast tanks, wake boats risk damaging lakes perhaps beyond reclamation? If the answer is Yes (and there is plenty of data to lead you to that answer), then you must consider limiting their activities even more than you are proposing, while we wait for 1) additional research that clarifies the role wake boats play, and 2) the development of a practical and PROVEN decontamination process. This is the only way the DEC can consider "...the interests of current AND FUTURE GENERATIONS of lake users and [...] ensure that natural resource values of public waters are fully protected." By declaring a moratorium on wake sports on all lakes, you can uphold your charge to generations yet to come while temporarily limiting activities that have the potential to render that charge impossible to achieve. Short of doing this, at the very least, you should consider limiting wake sports to water 30 feet deep, 700 feet from shore, and, most importantly, you should bring back some iteration of the Home Lake Rule.

jhsmd121@gmail.com

We are charged with turning over to our children and grandchildren the beautiful environment with which WE were gifted. Preservation of nature is vital as our legacy.

According to the Agency's own documented materials and the Summary of Proposed Changes, increasing the requirement to 100 acres would cause the number of eligible lakes to drop from 30 down to just 18. This is a 40% reduction in accessible water bodies for Vermont families. A restriction of this magnitude should only be implemented if there is a verified, catastrophic failure of the current rules. However, no such evidence has been presented.

The historical context of this rulemaking reveals a troubling lack of consistency. In the 2022 Responsible Wakes petition, the justification provided was for a 60-acre threshold, not 100. If 60 acres was the requested standard less than three years ago, how did the "safe" number nearly double to 100 in 2026? Without a new, peer-reviewed study explaining this jump, the 100-acre number appears to be a policy-driven target rather than a science-driven one.

Wake energy and shoreline force are functions of physics—specifically water depth and distance from the shore—not simply the total surface area of a lake. A long, narrow lake of 100 acres may actually be more susceptible to wave energy than a circular lake of 60 acres with a deeper center. By focusing on a flat acreage number, the ANR is ignoring the actual mechanics of how wakes interact with the environment.

To ensure a transparent rulemaking process, I am asking the Agency to answer the following: What specific environmental or ecological data shows that 60 acres (as previously petitioned) is insufficient, but 100 acres is protective?

What Vermont-based research was conducted between March 2024 and today to justify such a drastic shift in the minimum acreage?

The 2024 rule was a hard-fought, negotiated limit. It was designed to balance the rights of all water users with the protection of our natural resources. To abandon that compromise after only one full season—without providing valid data to support the change—undermines the integrity of the regulatory process.

Thresholds must be grounded in physics and measured impacts, not in a desire to disproportionately eliminate a specific use group. I urge the ANR to maintain the current, science-based 2024 standards.

Wake sports require a minimum of 100-acre WSZ & 3,000-ft run. It is well known at this point that large wake boat waves can unexpectedly overwhelm boaters, paddlers, swimmers, etc. I would not want to be put in harms way went out kayaking or paddle boarding with my children on Lake Sunset in Benson. I support VT DEC's proposal, but urge you provide further protection by adopting RWVL's rule changes. Thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rules .

I am very concerned about the effects of wake boat sports on our lakes ,especially the smaller lakes where under present rules ,it is allowed .I own a camp on Peacham Pond and I can comment on the severe adverse effects of wake sports there but I am also concerned for other lakes as well .

First ,I point out that the use of wake sports and wake full ballast boats affects all users and owners on a lake, the owners swimming and shorelines , families with young children's safety, the safety and enjoyment of canoists and kayackers, the large waves effects on wildlife and duck and loon nests . It is contradictory to all conservation and wildlife rules that the state of Vermont proudly has if allowing wake sports on smaller lakes as defined under present rules.

Secondly, at Peacham Pond there are approximately 75 camps and the 75 families that would be affected by just one wake sport boat to a large degree , the unsafe wake and waves the noise , safety of lake users etc. So we have the fun of one boater affecting greatly 75 others. Just take a moment and realize how unfair and undemocratic this is. It could be compared to allowing trailer trucks to pass through your neighborhood on a regular basis whenever they chose as long as the street was wide enough without restriction on family safety , environment etc.

So at the very least ,please support the new proposed rules that will be more restrictive to wake boat users to much larger lakes. Even there I believe that it is generally unwise,unsafe ,and unfair as stated above as well as environmentally unsound on most lakes to allow wake sports.

And very undemocratic.

And last ,there is no possibility to enforce any rules without the appropriate infrastructure required. This would require policing presence , not just rely on complaints, to stop a user at the time. It requires hot water monitoring for ballast -who will be monitoring this. And is the department of Fish and Wildlife or forest and conservation departments going to be funded to employ the necessary employees and infrastructure for this? It seems to me that this would be a very poor use of limited taxpayer monies to allow a use that requires such enforcement. And certainly it would need enforcing, especially to stop the spread of invasive species to all lakes where wake boat sports are allowed. Peacham Pond is a very clean environmentally sound quiet safe lake surrounded mostly by Groton State Forest . A lake of no invasive plants with trout ,known as one of the best for canoists and kayackers,and with several pairs of loons who nest on the edges of the islands.

This would all be destroyed or at least very negatively impacted by the use of wakeboats. which could come at any time by anyone that is not even a resident of the beautiful quiet lake that we cherish!! Therefore please consider these comments I have shared and at the least support the updated proposed rule changes so that we can continue to enjoy our lakes for 99% of the population versus the fun of 1% and the profit of the industry. THANK YOU

I support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. It is insane to make such a beautiful body of water into a noisy mess of destruction. The impact is devastating to swimmer and boater safety, invasive species spread, erosion issues, and destruction of quiet waters to loons, fish, and other non-humans who rely on the Waterbury Reservoir to survive.

I am commenting on all lakes and ponds, not just Peacham Pond where I own a camp. I am supporting the proposed, more restrictive rules. Use of wake sports is very disruptive environmentally to the shorelines. It is disturbing to owners of property on the lake and their families for the enjoyment of the lake. It's disruptive and unsafe to kayakers and canoeists who use Peacham Pond very much. It is disruptive to the loons, other shore birds, and their nests of which there are a great deal at Peacham Pond. It creates a much greater increase risk with invasive species. Peacham Pond is a pristine, quiet, clean lake mostly surrounded by Groton State Forest. There are about 75 camps with 75 families enjoying the lake. Allowing just one wake boat user to disrupt the safety and enjoyment of 75 owners is unfair, very undemocratic, and very unenvironmentally sound.

In addition to creating more restrictions of wake boats it is important to also provide funds for extra policing on the ponds to stop the wake boats immediately as needed. We need to be able to monitor the ballast before they enter the lake.

The users of wake boats on any lake or pond that isn't very large is very disturbing to the environment, the owners and other recreational users. It is most undemocratic to allow even one wake boat to disturb the rights and enjoyment of up to 100 other recreational users.

Having served as the Executive Director of The Aloha Foundation for a decade in the early to mid-2000s -- and more recently as the principal sailing program instructor at the Foundation's Ohana Family Camp on Lake Fairlee -- I have long observed the impacts of power craft on non-motorized water recreation. For most of my years on the water with children and families, a reasonably compatible relationship has existed between typical motor-powered craft -- standard waterskiing and pontoon boats primarily -- and the much larger numbers of rowboats, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and sailboats that operate in every quadrant of Lake Fairlee, from shore to shore. While the relatively moderate wakes of common power craft have always been causes for caution, their effects have long been accommodated through the training and water safety programs of the Aloha camps and the other summer camps on the lake. High intensity wakeboat wakes engender far more uncontrollable surface conditions that may result in overboarding of passengers or full capsizes of inherently unstable paddle and wind powered craft. The possible life-threatening consequences of such occurrences are well worth the DEC guarding against.

I strongly support the DEC's changes to wake sport rules. I have spent time on Lake Dunmore for more than 55 years, and the new wake sport use during the last several years has caused erosion to the shorelines, risks to the safety of swimmers and boaters from rogue waves that can travel over a mile, and an ongoing risk of new invasive species being introduced to the lake.

Lake Dunmore has many properties that are rented weekly to users from out of state, who are unaware of the risks to the lake from the wake boats that they bring. The greeters at the boat launch do a good job, but their efforts are not enough to keep many wake boat users from breaking the rules. The home lake rule should be included in the regulations.

Please implement the proposed changes, and make them even stronger. I support increasing the minimum wake sport zone to at least 100 acres (with at least a 3,000-foot run). Please do not compromise on this important change. I also support expanding safety buffer distance from other users and in-lake structures from 200 feet to 500 feet. In addition, the distance from shore for wake boat use should be increased to at least 1,000 feet to protect shorelines and lake users from the damages of erosion and injury from rogue waves.

The wardens do not have the resources to constantly police the activities of wake sport users. Stronger rules will make it much easier to enforce protection of the lakes.

Thank you for your work to protect our lakes.

I am a third-generation user of our lake, and I am so disappointed. It is troubling to see a few loud and often unkind voices trying to make changes where they are not needed.

I have been lucky enough to grow up on Lake Fairlee. I've spent my summers at Aloha Hive as both a camper and a counselor, and this lake has always been a huge part of my life. I've sailed, kayaked, and swum here for years and now I get to wakesurf a few times each summer, which I love. My family is deeply committed to this lake, and one day my brother and I hope to keep our family home and carry on these traditions.

That is why I am so concerned about the proposed changes to wakesports rules in Vermont and the effort to redefine "Normal Use" in a way that excludes wakeboats. The fact that technology has evolved does not make the activity itself a "new use." Wake surfing is simply an evolution of boating recreation much like cell phones and social media.

There was a time when waterskiing and tubing were not considered "normal use." Those activities were once viewed as new, disruptive, or unnecessary. Today, they are widely accepted as part of Vermont's recreational culture. The same pattern is repeating itself. I see every day how the world continues to grow and evolve. When cell phones first appeared, many people resisted them and questioned whether they were necessary or appropriate. Over time, society adapted. Progress can feel uncomfortable at first, but that does not mean it should be rejected.

Our approach to defining "normal use" must evolve as well. We should not freeze recreation in the past simply because equipment has improved. Instead, we should focus on safe, respectful operation and balanced rules that consider all users. No one should be excluded simply because they participate in a different activity.

I disagree with all the purposed rule changes.

Please let me be able to do a healthy sport on a lake I love.

I support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. These are important changes to enhance swimmer and boater safety, invasive species spread, erosion issues, and impact to loons, fish, and other non-humans who rely on the Waterbury Reservoir to survive.

I spend a lot of time on Vermont lakes and I find that wake sports create dangerous conditions for human users. I've seen paddle boarders dumped over, people bobbing in fishing boats and people frightened by bow-high boats bearing down on them.

Thanks for making us more safe on the water.

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed 2025 wakesport amendments. As the Agency moves toward a decision, it is imperative that any regulatory changes remain grounded in objective, verifiable data rather than subjective petitions or shifting public pressure. Sound lake management depends on measurable environmental standards, not assumptions or policy preferences.

The proposed increase from a 50-acre to a 100-acre minimum lake size lacks any documented ecological threshold. Lake acreage is a spatial calculation, not a measurement of environmental response. Wake energy is governed by physics—boat speed, water depth, and distance from shore. Those variables do not change simply because a lake's total surface area increases. Why is 100 acres considered environmentally protective while 60 or 80 acres is not? Without a study directly linking lake size to sediment disturbance, shoreline erosion, or habitat loss, this proposal appears to function as a categorical exclusion rather than a science-based safeguard. Regulatory thresholds should be tied to demonstrated environmental need, not geometric modeling alone.

Equally concerning is the State's obligation to implement and educate before it restricts. The 2024 rules have only recently taken effect and have had limited time to be fully socialized among the boating community. Has the Agency ensured that current standards are thoroughly integrated into official Vermont boater education materials and enforcement training programs? Regulatory expansion without proper education undermines compliance and erodes public trust. For example, many boaters already struggle to judge 250 feet on open water. Expanding that buffer to 500 feet—nearly two football fields—without a comprehensive statewide education and outreach effort is impractical and likely to increase accidental violations and user conflict rather than environmental protection.

I also reject the proposal to classify wakesports as a “non-normal use.” Towed watersports behind inboard motorboats have been a consistent and longstanding presence on Vermont lakes since well before 1993. The evolution of hull design, ballast systems, and wave-shaping technology does not transform a decades-old recreational category into a legally distinct new activity. The statutory language regarding non-normal uses was intended to prevent the introduction of incompatible or unprecedented activities—not to freeze technological development at 1993 standards. If modernization alone justifies reclassification, that logic could eventually be applied to nearly any contemporary vessel.

Finally, I urge the Agency to address specific concerns—such as mooring field definitions or the “home-lake” rule—through targeted clarification rather than reopening and restructuring the entire regulatory framework. A reasonable and science-based compromise was reached in 2024 after substantial review and public input. That framework deserves time for proper implementation, monitoring, and evaluation before sweeping amendments are considered.

I respectfully request that the Agency uphold the 2024 standards, focus on consistent education and enforcement, and ensure that any future adjustments are firmly supported by Vermont-specific, data-driven analysis.

I support the DEC's changes but feel as if they do not go far enough. While limiting the area for wakesports to a confined area is a start, it is inevitable that those boundaries will be pushed, violated, or simply ignored. I believe that nothing short of an all out ban will be the positive impact that Joe's Pond needs. Dealing with the milfoil infestation has directly affected fishing, boating and swimming, taking fun activities away from being able to be fully enjoyed. For us that only get to enjoy the pond for small spans of time every year, it's only normal to develop a strong urge to ban wakesports all together, especially when there are other lakes and ponds where it may be better suited.

Thank you for this opportunity to weigh in on proposed changes to the Use of Public Waters Rules as those changes relate to wakesports on Vermont's inland lakes. I enthusiastically support changes addressing safety that will eliminate a number of smaller lakes from the wakesports eligible list. As a property owner on Willoughby Lake, however - a lake that will remain wakesports eligible regardless of what rule modifications are made - I have serious concerns about protections for the lakes that are left. According to the most recent studies, even considering the proposed changes, the distance from shore and others on the water remains insufficient, as does the minimum depth in the wakesports zone. Protection from further spread of AIS is totally inadequate.

It is amazing that despite all the public input, the DEC still fails to acknowledge the profound impact the use of a few wakeboats on our lakes has had on the vast majority who simply want to enjoy our lakes in traditional ways. It is incomprehensible that we bend the rules to allow these boats on our lakes when, by virtue of their design, they are unable to meet statutory requirements (10 VSA 1454) designed to protect our lakes from the spread of AIS. It's clearly time to prioritize stewardship over access.

I support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule because I am concerned for swimmers and boater safety, invasive species spread, erosion issues, and impact to loons, fish, and other non-humans who rely on the Waterbury Reservoir to survive.

Wake boats should be limited to the big lake. Their wakes will be a hazard to canoes, kayaks, and surf boards on the smaller lakes. On a small lake the waves from these boats are compounded by waves reflecting off nearby shores. Their owners of these boats have absolutely no regard for other users of the lake. Shut them down!

I have lived on Peacham Pond for 28 years and support the new proposed rules. Our pond is too small to support wake boats in wake mode. Most of our boating activities are kyakers. A wake "zone" is indistinguishable, it is hard to imagine kyakers, paddleboarder and canoers not being threatened by wakeboat waves.

We also are seeing more Air B & B's on the pond which if allowed will attract non-resident wakeboaters. The dangers and enviromental harm will be exacebated if Peacham Pond becomes a wakeboarding destination.

I am writing as a frequent visitor to Lake Fairlee and a close friend of many residents who cherish this beautiful natural resource. I am deeply concerned about the proposed changes to the wakesports zone regulations, which would significantly restrict access and block usage on Lake Fairlee all together. The current wakesports rules are working. During the 2024 and 2025 boating season, No complaints were filed. This demonstrates that the current framework is effective in balancing recreational use with safety and environmental stewardship. There is no compelling evidence to suggest that more restrictive measures are necessary.

The proposed requirement for a wakesports zone to contain 100 contiguous acres that are at least 500 feet from shore and 20 feet deep would effectively eliminate wakesports on Lake Fairlee. This change is not only unnecessary but also inconsistent with the agency's stated goal of using "the least restrictive approach practicable that adequately addresses the conflicts." The existing 50-acre requirement already ensures that wake energy is adequately dissipated and that wakesports can be conducted safely and respectfully.

Moreover, the current 200-foot safety offset has proven effective. Increasing this to 500 feet would introduce confusion and create enforcement challenges, especially since boaters are trained and licensed under the 200-foot standard. The existing offset allows wakeboats to maintain safe distances from other vessels and swimmers, in accordance with 23 V.S.A. § 3311(c)(1).

It is vital that we preserve equitable access to Lake Fairlee for all community members. Wakesports are a valued and legitimate use of the lake, and the current rules already provide a framework that supports safety, environmental protection, and shared enjoyment. Imposing further restrictions risks creating unnecessary conflict and excluding responsible users without clear benefit.

I respectfully urge you to maintain the current wakesports zone criteria and safety offsets. Let us continue to support a balanced, inclusive approach that honors the diverse ways our community enjoys Lake Fairlee.

As a Joe's ponder, I've seen how our small lake has changed as a result of wake boat (WB) activity. As my frontage is entirely in the littoral zone, the deep waves caused by heavily weighted sterns have much more of an impact at my shore than regular boats. It's unfortunate that you have to be overly focused on the kinds of activities happening on the lake before your grandchildren enter the water. Actually, it's tough to see those sneaky deep waves when you're on your dock, let alone in the water. If this isn't a safety issue I don't know what is. If the kids want to be knocked over by waves, I'll bring them to the ocean. At least they won't be knocked into a dock, boat lift or raft.

Some WB owners love to make a point that wake boats run very slow and thus do no harm. They just are not informed. These types of crafts are specifically designed to go slow with powerful motors, just so they can create their waves. And the boats are getting more powerful. This article in a boat magazine highlights it.

<https://www.pdbmagazine.com/2024/08/extreme-wakes-and-massive-power>

And trying to increase enforcement is just not financially viable. If WB are regulated to the larger lakes, it will save Vermont money or at least allow authorities to focus on other boating issues.

As you are aware, Joe's Pond now has Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM). I'm not implying that a WB brought it here. I AM saying that I've personally witnessed a WB load their ballast tanks in areas that already have EWM, potentially taking in EWM fragments (no restrictions against that), play in the area now allowed and then when finished, head to their docks or boat ramp discharging their ballast along the way in the shallow areas. They may not have brought it in but they are surely capable of spreading it to other areas and lakes. And as if we don't have enough to do to combat the spread of EWM, WB just exasperates the issue. Just look at the EWM found at our boat ramp. Viewing a publicly available map will show everyone the locations of EWM relative to the ramp.

<https://www.joespondvermont.com/milfoil-in-joes-pond.html>

As a greeter, fishing boats with wet wells are not an issue as they are able to totally empty their small tanks prior to and after leaving the water. Scientific studies have been submitted to ANR and DEC but for some reason, mistrusted. I firmly support DEC's amended Rule

We need to keep lakes more protected

There are plenty of larger lake options for wake sports and the erosion caused by these types of boats is damaging to our lakes

I am someone who deeply values Vermont's lakes and the natural beauty. I spend time on the lakes because of the sense of community and family memories that are shared from those who use them. Protecting a balance is important.

For that reason, I oppose the proposed 500-foot buffer from "any object" within a wake zone and anymore rule making from the 2024 rules.

Vermont already operates under a 200-foot safety framework that provides clear and enforceable guidance for boaters. Expanding this to a 500-foot buffer around any object just for wakesurfing effectively creates a moving target that would make lawful operation extremely difficult and, in many areas, impractical and unsafe.

I was encouraged to see recent reports showing that no complaints were filed in the 2023 and 2024 summer season. To me, that demonstrates the existing regulations are working as intended. When complaints are nonexistent and no violations are found, it suggests that boaters are operating within the law.

If concerns remain, I believe the most constructive solution is increased education and outreach rather than additional restrictions. Clear communication, boating safety education, and environmental stewardship efforts would strengthen compliance and continue protecting our lakes.

I also believe there is some misunderstanding about the actual impact of wakesports. Some camps and lake users are not accurately describing what they are experiencing and often assume that anything being towed behind a boat is wakesurfing. From my experience, camps and shoreline users often feel more wave activity from standard camp boats and general recreational boating than from the small amount of operating wakesurf boats following the current rules.

As a mom who has spent countless summer days on the lake with my kids—who also attend the Aloha Camps—I am writing to ask you to keep the current wakesports rules in place. Some of our best memories are made out there: laughing, cheering each other on while wakesurfing, and soaking up time as a family. It's been a gift, and I would hate to see those opportunities disappear for so many Vermont families.

The current rule—allowing wakesurfing on lakes with at least 50 contiguous acres, a minimum depth of 20 feet, and 500 feet from shore—was just finalized in March 2024. We have only had one full summer season to see how it works. It is incredibly premature to double that minimum to 100 acres without giving the current system a real chance.

Previously, the ANR concluded that the 50-acre rule was sufficient to safely dissipate wake energy and allow for a sufficient 3,000-foot run. I have seen no new data to suggest otherwise. Increasing the acreage would significantly reduce the number of lakes available to families, putting more pressure on fewer bodies of water. This leads to more congestion and cuts back on recreational access that we value for family connection, healthy activity, and mental wellness.

To my knowledge, there have been no formal complaints or violations since the 50-acre rule was adopted. This is a strong sign that the rule is working and being respected. It doesn't make sense to pivot so quickly without new evidence or widespread problems.

The ANR is committed to balanced, least-restrictive solutions for shared water use. Upping the requirement to 100 acres is a step away from that goal. Please, do not overcorrect something that isn't broken. I urge you to leave the 50-acre rule as it is. It's working.

I am submitting this comment to formally address the lack of technical and scientific foundation regarding the proposed revisions to Vermont's wakesports rules. As it stands, the proposal moves away from objective resource management and toward a subjective, petition-based system that ignores the progress made in the 2024 rulemaking.

The transition from a 50-acre to a 100-acre minimum has been presented without a single supporting ecological study. There is no transparency regarding the selection of this number; specifically, the Agency has not produced data explaining why 100 acres is a necessary safety or environmental threshold while smaller increments like 60 or 80 acres are deemed insufficient. This shift appears to be a targeted effort to disqualify specific lakes rather than a response to measured environmental degradation.

Equally concerning is the 3,000-foot run requirement. This metric is not supported by industry standards, nor has the state shared any hydrodynamic modeling to suggest that a 3,000-foot straight line is more protective of water quality than a 2,000-foot run. Shoreline impact is dictated by the energy of the wave—which is a factor of distance and depth—not by the length of the boat's path.

Furthermore, the expansion of the safety buffer to 500 feet is a practical failure in the making. Expecting the general boating public to accurately judge a distance of nearly two football fields from every shore point is unrealistic. When rules are impossible for a reasonable person to visualize, they do not enhance safety; they merely create a landscape of unintentional violations and unnecessary conflict.

If the Agency has identified specific, narrow concerns—such as the definition of mooring fields or the logistics of the home-lake rule—the appropriate response is to address those specific administrative items. It is unnecessary and unfair to reopen the entire regulatory framework to subjective changes when a reasonable, science-based compromise was already established and finalized in 2024.

Regulations must be built on impact studies and field research. Because the state has not provided this evidence, I urge the Agency to maintain the current standards and focus on data-driven management rather than responding to interest-group pressure.

The Waterbury Reservoir is a gem for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, swimming, small boating, paddle boarding and the like. It is not the place for high powered boats, wake boats or vessels that produce huge amounts of wave action. I have been on the reservoir in my fishing kayak and have been nearly swamped by the wake of boats pulling water skiers. Even these boats produce wave action that can rile up the shoreline. Please do not allow these wake boats on bodies of water like the Waterbury Reservoir.

I support strongly support restrictions on wake sports in Waterbury Reservoir. As one of the MANY people that recreate via swimming, paddleboarding, are canoeing, I am shocked that is still allowed, given the impact a single wake boat can have on the hundreds of other people who use the reservoir quietly, and the impact on the entire ecosystem. As a swimmer I will hear the rumbling of that boat if its anyway remotely close and the disruption to quiet enjoyment so many people seek, and worry it may not see me. I also find it odd how they many times fail to follow the rules restricting speed close to shore and other people. Personally I think that all engines over 10hp should be banned at least on busy summer weekends.

I support banning wakesports listed. I love Waterbury Reservoir and peaceful canoeing and not scaring our awesome wild life. Must stay that way!

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion. Specifically, these proposed improvements:

- Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

Wakesports, while fun for the participant, have impacts that are dangerous and extend far beyond the space of that 'fun'. My concerns center around:

- Public Safety: Massive wake waves can suddenly overwhelm swimmers, children, and other boaters.
- Infrastructure Gaps: The DEC plans to replace the "Home Lake Rule" with hot water decontamination but lacks the necessary funding and timeline to build the required decon stations.
- Environmental Damage:
 - High-impact wakes erode shorelines.
 - Residual water in ballast tanks can spread invasive species.
- Limited Visibility: Heavy aft ballast weight lifts the boat's bow, significantly impairing the driver's view of others on the water.

I strongly support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. Wake sports bring an array of safety concerns, along with less ability to control invasive species.

I wholeheartedly support strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule to include the Waterbury Reservoir. Let's keep human impact at the very minimum at our serene reservoir. Only trolling motors should really be allowed to keep the peace!

Please don't strip out the Home Lake Rule.

Contrary to what DEC representatives stated at the Public Hearing in Newport last summer, Leg Counsel (Deputy Chief Counsel, Office of Legislative Counsel re. S. 224) has testified that the Department of Motor Vehicles is glad to help identify wake boats and home lakes.

We AIS prevention-volunteers are willing to yield to DEC's expressed reluctance to implement the boat sticker provision in the current rule.

So please, Department of Environmental Conservation, time for you to give a little to help conserve the environment from increased spread of AIS.

Plus, you are very, very unlikely to get funding for a comprehensive decontamination program in the next few years as evidenced by its absence from your current and FY 2027 proposed budget. Until that laudable aspiration is achieved, we need the partial protection that the Home Lake Rule will provide.

Let the kids have fun

I support MOST of the new rules proposed by DEC. The giant, gaping hole is the removal of the Home Lake Rule (HLR). Without it, the pristine lakes in Vermont are totally exposed to the transfer of aquatic invasive species (AIS) by wakeboats. You do not have the funding for a robust and effective decontamination system at this time. It may take years to get this. Until then PLEASE do not leave local lake associations defenseless. DMV agreed to add the wakeboat designation to the boat registration from AND the Home Lake Designation. Your claim this summer that they would not do this was false.

If and when an effective wakeboat decontamination system- with multiple locations is in place, then maybe we can remove the HLR. We know that the HLR is NOT perfect, but please listen to our concerns and allow local lake associations to be the on the ground, local protectors of our lake.

Please do not claim that "you cannot enforce" this rule. We know that enforcement does not prevent so many of the DEC rules- what about jetskis? Do you enforce this? I think not. The local associations do that and more. You do not receive the funding to enforce many of the DEC rules.

PLEASE really listen this time. We all share the goal of protecting our lakes. Local lake associations are willing to do this work, but we need your help!

WAKEBOAT BOATS RUIN SMALL LAKE EXPERIENCES ON SMALL BODIES WATER LIKE THE WATERBURY RES. WITH THEIR DANGEROUS WAVES AND OFTEN LOUD MUSIC .

I'm in favor of stronger water rules than those proposed by DEC staff. The parameters proposed by RWVL makes sense to me in addition to a moratorium on wake sports on inland lakes until adequate numbers of boat wash stations can be established. I also support a home lake rule.

I oppose any wake sport boats or wake sport of any kind.

For the past 50 summers, I have been invited, fortunately, to visit Lake Willoughby. Until the past few years, my visits have been idyllic.

Several years ago, I arrived to the cacophony of some unknown origin, only to be informed by my hosts of the arrival of wake boats. This was my first introduction. I was not happy and proceeded to spend my few days listening to roaring motors and disrupted enjoyment of my time visiting this beautiful lake. From ridiculous "wakes" that are perilous to swimmers, boaters and paddle boarders, to the incredible negative impact upon the environment, there is absolutely no place for these boats. The noise level increase alone is a hardship on visitors and residents, alike. The erosion of the shoreline is surely negatively impacted by the additional forces of unnatural, increased water movement. Flora and fauna suffer greatly, as well. Closing lakes within Vermont will surely increase the population of wake boats on those lakes that are still charged with accepting their presence.

Please take these factors into consideration in your deliberations. Let's preserve the quality of our lakes and thus the quality of our lives.

Respectfully,

Michelle Stein

I kayak only on Harvey Lake in West Barnet. Kayaking has been intimidating, threatening, and discouraging since the invasion of a wake boat(s). I do not live on the Lake and so cannot judge, nor is there any way to be informed in a timely manner of the presence of a wake boat. My inclination, sadly, is to avoid the lake altogether. The ANR-required distance from shore for wake-boat operation doesn't address the threats to kayakers, canoeists, sailboaters, or swimmers off a resting or moored boat. To prevent shoreline erosion and safely dissipate wake-boaters' large wakes, they should operate at 500 feet from shorelines, docks, and other boats. Is the wake-boater brought to the designated area? Is the designated area clearly marked? Cleaning the boats at a hot water treatment station is unrealistic, given that wakeboats have closed ballasts. Closed ballast systems on wake boats significantly contribute to the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) by retaining, rather than fully draining, lake water containing organisms like zebra mussel larvae and plant fragments. These systems often hold 8–23 gallons of residual water, creating a "perfect" transport mechanism.

I am writing in strong support of the Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed updates to the Use of Public Waters Rules, particularly the changes addressing wakesports. These revisions respond appropriately to long-standing concerns about public safety, shoreline erosion, and environmental protection, and they represent an important step toward preserving Vermont's lakes for everyone.

I support the proposal to increase the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres with a 3,000-foot run, and I urge the DEC to adopt this requirement as written, without flexibility or compromise. Lakes that cannot meet this standard simply do not have the physical capacity to safely accommodate high-displacement wakesurf boats alongside swimmers, paddlers, anglers, and traditional boaters.

I also strongly support expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users and in-water structures. The current 200-foot standard is clearly inadequate given the size and power of modern wakesurf boat wakes, which remain large and forceful far beyond that distance. These wakes can arrive suddenly and unpredictably, posing serious risks to swimmers, children near shore, anglers in small boats, and paddlers who are especially vulnerable to being swamped or capsized.

From a safety perspective, wakesurf boats introduce unique hazards. Their design relies on heavy aft ballast that raises the bow and significantly limits forward visibility for the operator. This makes it harder to see swimmers, kayaks, canoes, or fishing boats in time to react—especially on busy or narrow lakes. In addition, the size of the wakes themselves can overwhelm people in the water or destabilize other vessels without warning.

The environmental impacts are equally concerning. High-energy wakes entering shallow water churn up sediment, uproot aquatic plants, and damage fish habitat. This turbidity reduces water clarity, interferes with fish feeding, and contributes to algae blooms fueled by nutrients released from disturbed sediments. These blooms can harm pets, wildlife, and human health, while diminishing the overall quality of Vermont's lakes.

Shoreline erosion caused by repeated large wakes is another serious issue. When these wakes crash onto shore, they accelerate erosion, undermine docks, and damage moored boats. They also threaten sensitive wildlife habitat. For example, loon nests are often built only inches above calm water levels; large wakes during nesting season can easily swamp nests and destroy eggs.

I am also concerned about the spread of invasive species. Wakesurf boats commonly use ballast tanks that do not fully drain, allowing water—and invasive organisms such as plants or spiny waterfleas—to

be transported between lakes. While the DEC proposes replacing the “Home Lake Rule” with hot water decontamination, there is currently a lack of clear funding and timelines for building and staffing the necessary decontamination stations. Until this infrastructure is fully in place and functional, expanding wakesurfing activity increases the risk of irreversible ecological harm.

Finally, beyond measurable safety and environmental impacts, wakesurf boats fundamentally alter the character of Vermont’s lakes. They are loud, visually intrusive, and disruptive, undermining the sense of peace and calm that draws residents and visitors alike to these waters. If swimmers, paddlers, anglers, and other non-motorized users are effectively pushed out, Vermont risks losing not only environmental quality but also the recreational and economic value of its lakes.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support the DEC’s proposed changes and encourage the Department to adopt them without dilution. Vermont’s lakes are shared public resources, and these rules are necessary to ensure they remain safe, healthy, and enjoyable for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

This is an update to my comments when the existing watersports rules were considered. That original comment is still relevant and is included below.

About two years have passed since your watersports rulemaking change was adopted. I commented at that time as a property owner on Christmas Lake where I was talking about the realities of living on a lake where wake surfing is just one form of recreation in addition to distance swimming, paddle sports, fishing, water skiing, leisure cruising, etc. During these last two years, the number of wake surf boats on our 264-acre lake have continued to increase, and by last count, our property owners had 14 surf boats. That is a lot of pressure on a small lake. The impacts are decreasing water quality from greater shoreline erosion, increasing safety challenges for other concurrent recreational users, and discouraging some lake users from venturing out onto the water while wake surfing is taking place. Despite our own state university doing some of the most important research work on surfing wakes, Minnesota has no statewide rules for distance from shore or depth of water. To help protect Christmas Lake we posted a map at the boat landing showing the safe-surfing area. That map will be updated for this summer to reflect our understanding of the University of Minnesota wake research to protect our shorelines and lake bottom. Our map will depict a safe surfing area that is 575 feet from shore and 20 feet in depth. We look forward to the day when our safe surf zone can be shown on GPS mapping systems to alert the drivers when they venture out of the safe surf zone, because not every surf boat driver may be aware of the zone nor why it is so important to stay within the zone.

I also have the privilege to serve as the president of Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations, a non-profit, all-volunteer organization that works to inform our community of lake stewards on lake issues. The three most important concerns of our members are: aquatic invasive species (AIS), clean water, and enhanced wake activities. These concerns lie at the heart of your existing rules and the proposed revisions. We commend Vermont for taking a leadership role on this controversial issue to protect the environment and the personal safety of others.

AIS infestations continue to increase in our state and nearly every popular lake has one or more invasive species. Zebra mussels are one species that shows no slowdown in its spreading. Science confirms that many gallons of water remain in “drained” ballast tanks and that zebra mussel veligers can continue to live for weeks in these “drained” ballast tanks. I support the intent of hot water (thermal) decontamination, but caution that ballast tanks must be the prime focus of the decontamination. From personal experience, I can confirm that it often takes special effort to get to every ballast tank.

And as a resident of the state with the loon as its state bird, I applaud you for including the change to increase the protection of the loon nests.

Original comment: I live on Christmas Lake, a 264-acre lake just outside of Minneapolis. We are being increasingly inundated by wake surf boats on our lake; a dozen lake residents operate their own while transient wake boaters come by for the day. Wake surfing has become a significant, polarizing issue on Christmas Lake, just as it has on many small Minnesota lakes. This is because you can't avoid the impacts to others who want to use the lake at the same time. Personally, I have had waves crash over the bow of our pontoon boat and I have been tossed around when trying to paddle board. Lake residents know it's useless to try to waterski when one or more surf boats are operating. Perhaps of greatest concern, we've had a near-fatal accident between a boat, nose up in the air with a surfer behind, crashing into a 2-person kayak. Some lakes — like ours — are just too small for this kind of activity.

Thank you for considering my comments.

As a resident of the Upper Valley, I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed changes to Vermont's wakesport rules. I respectfully oppose any additional changes at this time, and several aspects of the proposal are particularly troubling.

First, before adding new restrictions, the State must ensure that existing rules are fully implemented, communicated, and properly incorporated into official boater education programs. Expanding regulations without first ensuring comprehensive education and consistent enforcement undermines the process. Regulatory implementation and accountability should come before rules

Second, Vermont's current rule is already one of the most restrictive in the country. The addition of increased acreage thresholds further reduces public water access, which I believe is everyone's rights. The Responsible wakes group they stated that 60 contiguous acres would satisfy their concerns, so I believe that is where the rule should be.

I love our lakes and think that this next round of rulemaking has gone too far.

My name is Bernie Gracy. I submit these comments from three capacities: as President of the Averill Lakes Association in the NEK, as a Trustee of Paul Smith's College, home to the Adirondack Watershed Institute, and as a graduate of a Master of Science program in Natural Resources Management with a concentration in Aquatic Restoration Management. That training informs my perspective on watershed protection and environmental risk governance. I offer these comments in response to the proposed revisions to the Use of Public Waters Rule, specifically the removal of the Home Lake Rule and the elimination of proof of decontamination requirements for wake sports on inland lakes.

The question that should be before the Department is whether mitigation safeguards should be reduced and wake sports eligibility concentrated in fewer lakes in advance of demonstrated prevention capacity. Neighboring jurisdictions have addressed this challenge differently.

Across the Adirondack Park, the Adirondack Watershed Institute operates a coordinated network of staffed, state funded hot water decontamination stations positioned at high use public launches and transportation corridors. This network is integrated with trained watercraft inspection stewards and supported by New York State environmental funding. It is fully operational and implemented across a comparable ecological corridor.

The Department's responsibilities under 10 V.S.A. §1424 include preserving, enhancing, restoring, and conserving Vermont's natural resources for current and future generations. Regulatory relaxation that precedes the deployment of operational prevention infrastructure is difficult to reconcile with a precautionary interpretation of that mandate.

Prevention capacity is not conceptual. It requires legislative appropriations, executive implementation, procurement of equipment, strategic placement of decontamination stations, and reliable seasonal staffing. It requires funding, deployment, and enforcement.

At present, such infrastructure does not exist in the Northeast Kingdom at a scale sufficient to support wake sports eligibility while simultaneously removing existing mitigation safeguards.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Department to maintain the Home Lake Rule and proof of decontamination requirements and to pause wake sports eligibility for qualifying inland lakes until minimum prevention infrastructure has been funded, procured, staffed, and deployed in the region. Regulatory eligibility should be conditioned on demonstrated infrastructure readiness.

Aquatic invasive species pressures are regional. Prevention must operate at the same geographic scale. The Adirondack experience demonstrates that coordinated, state supported infrastructure is achievable and effective. Vermont has the opportunity (and the obligation) to align policy evolution with

operational capacity rather than relaxing safeguards in advance of system readiness.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernie Gracy

President, Averill Lakes Association

I support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. While these large-wave-producing boats may be fun for the few who use them, they negatively impact others on the Waterbury Reservoir and other public Vermont waterways. That includes all of the following: swimmer safety, boater safety, invasive species spread, erosion issues, and impact to loons, fish, and other non-humans who rely on the Waterbury Reservoir to survive.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to respectfully but firmly oppose the proposed changes to the wakesports regulations on Vermont lakes.

I have lived on a Vermont lake during the summers my entire life. These waters are not just a recreational space to me. They are part of my childhood, my family's traditions, and the broader community that gathers here year after year. I care deeply about preserving our lakes and ensuring they remain accessible for responsible use by everyone.

Our lakes belong to all Vermonters. They are shared natural resources, and no single user group should be given preference over another when existing regulations are already in place and functioning. The current 50 acre minimum area requirement and 200 foot safety offset were only recently implemented. From what I have personally observed, these rules are working. Boaters are aware of them and are following them. I have not seen clear evidence of widespread violations or measurable harm that would justify further restrictions at this time.

Adding more rules without clear data demonstrating necessity does not promote fairness. It risks creating unnecessary division among lake users and limiting access for responsible families who are complying with the existing standards. Regulation should be based on objective evidence and demonstrated need, not pressure from a vocal minority.

I also strongly oppose Section 3.7 regarding Lake Management and Research. As written, this provision allows an approved lake to be restricted under a management or research designation without defined criteria, clear study parameters, or a guaranteed reinstatement timeline. That structure effectively creates the possibility of indefinite suspension of access. Any research based restriction should include transparent benchmarks, measurable objectives, and a clearly stated reinstatement schedule so that it cannot be used as a permanent limitation under the label of study.

The current rules deserve time to operate as intended. We should evaluate their long term effectiveness using data before considering additional layers of regulation. Thoughtful stewardship and shared access can coexist, and I believe Vermont can lead with balanced, evidence based policy rather than reactionary restrictions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Wyatt McLaughlin

Dear State of Vermont,

I am writing today to respectfully ask that you keep the rules the same. In my view, much of the current commentary contains misinformation and reflects a lack of understanding about the actual conditions and activity on Lake Fairlee and Vermont Lakes in general.

I have been fortunate enough to spend time at Lake Fairlee, where I regularly fish, kayak, and water ski. Over the past several years, I have only observed one instance of wake surfing activity, and that occurred near the boat launch in the zone. The wakeboat had one small child learning to wake surf. The activity lasted approximately 15 minutes.

At the time, I was out on a sailboat and experienced no issues whatsoever from the wake. The boat operator stayed within a small, defined area and gave me the right of way when I crossed the lake. The interaction was respectful and safe.

Based on my personal experience, I believe the current rules are working. They allow for shared use of the lake in a way that is safe, inclusive, and respectful of all users. I do not believe additional restrictions are necessary. I will mention that where I had trouble was the tubing from the nearby camp, they were doing circles around me.

I also question what scientific evidence there is to support such drastic changes to an existing rule that is not even two years old. Fear and unsubstantiated claims of violations seem to be the primary basis for this change. Before making significant regulatory changes, there should be clear, verifiable data demonstrating a real and measurable problem. There has been none.

In my opinion, the current 50 continuous-acre standard works for all users of the lake and provides a fair balance between recreation and safety.

Due to the excessive shoreline damage caused by wakeboats, I think their use should be limited. Wakeboats should be permitted only 500 feet away from any shoreline. 500 feet away from any loon nesting sites. Wakeboats should be allowed on lakes 150 acres or larger.

I am writing in support of the proposed changes to the Wakesport Rules. My family owns lakefront property on Lake Willoughby, and we have been vacationing at the lake for over 70 years. I have personally experienced the unpleasant effects of large wake boats while swimming and kayaking on the lake, such as massive waves, and have feared for my own safety and that of my children and grandchildren.

I support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. I use Waterbury Reservoir regularly for swimming and kayaking. There are plenty of opportunities for motorized boats as well without the outsized impact of wake boats boats that cause heavy swells that can capsize a kayak or injure a swimmer.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I really appreciate this process.

I support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. My perspective is informed from activity on the Waterbury Reservoir. Wakeboats, high speed motorboats and even low speed 'partyboats' create conditions that marginalize non-motorized boaters - people drawn to the reservoir for different types of recreation in what seems to be larger numbers. As a canoeist, I can attest to the impact on the shoreline. Erosion appears to be accelerated and water clarity/visibility is impacted along the shoreline. I don't have any evidence to confirm that these are negative impacts but from a layperson they don't seem beneficial.

My husband and I have owned lakefront property on Joe's Pond in West Danville, VT since 2016. We own a pontoon, several kayaks, paddle boards and a sunfish. Our 5 adult children and their families love visiting our vacation home. We have 10 grandchildren. Please help us maintain strict guidelines for use of wakesports on our lake! I have personally almost capsized in my kayak by waves from the wakeboard. Our stonewall and shoreline have been affected. We had to repair one of the doors on our pontoon when a huge wave pushed it open and actually bent the door... thank God no grandchildren were on the pontoon that day! I worry about our loons and suspect that the churning generated by the boats has contributed to our evasive milfoil problem. PLEASE help us with safe and environmentally friendly use of this beautiful lake. Ideally, wakesports will be banned... but at least help us with strict regulations. The width of our lake and mainly somewhat shallow waters should be considered. Thank you!

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about canoer/kayaker and swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion:

Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run).

Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or structures.

Massive waves can overwhelm swimmers, children, and canoes and kayaks.

High-impact wakes erode shorelines and destroy loon nests.

Residual water in ballast tanks spread invasive species.

Stirring up of legacy phosphorus from the lake bottom.

Heavy aft ballast weight lifts the boat's bow, significantly impairing the driver's view of others on the water.

Wake boats do not belong on Vermont's small lakes due to safety and environmental concerns. One person's recreational enjoyment should not put other people's safety nor the environment at increased risk.

I am writing to you as a real estate agent who works directly with families making significant investments in communities.

In my profession, I can tell you with certainty that access to amenities matters. Buyers consistently look for homes that allow fair access to the natural and recreational opportunities that define Vermont living. Lakes are among our most valued assets. When families choose to purchase homes near them, they are not only buying property they are investing in a lifestyle and in the local economy.

Lakefront homes in Vermont are limited in supply. They are highly sought after, and they contribute substantially to municipalities. These properties generate meaningful property tax revenue that supports schools, road maintenance, emergency services, and town infrastructure. The health of our lake communities is directly tied to responsible, balanced access to the water.

When recreation opportunities are restricted beyond what is clearly necessary, it creates ripple effects. Limiting access to certain forms of recreation places pressure on the broader economic systems from property values to tourism, local businesses, marinas, contractors, and service providers. Buyers pay close attention to regulatory stability. When rules continually change, it creates uncertainty, confusion, and sometimes conflict among lake users and property owners.

After reviewing the current rules, I see a fair and balanced approach that considers multiple types of lake users. The existing framework provides structure while still allowing responsible recreational use. Continually tightening standards without clear, consistent justification risks upsetting that balance. I urge you to allow more lakes to establish designated wakesport zones where appropriate. Doing so does not eliminate quiet-use lakes. There will continue to be many lakes with no-wake or low-wake environments available for those who prefer them. A thoughtful distribution of use preserves choice and reduces user conflict by clearly defining expectations.

Vermont's lakes are shared resources. A balanced approach that supports environmental stewardship,

recreational diversity, and economic vitality benefits everyone: homeowners, towns, businesses, and visitors alike.

I support tightening the regulations concerning wake sports to include more lakes. We have only a few lakes wide enough to support this activity. This activity seriously damages shorelines and as a seasonal camp owner I am very concerned.

As a real estate professional who works with families investing in homes and communities on lakes, I can tell you that access to recreation is a big part of their decisions. Recreation plays a major role in lakefront homebuying. Lakefront properties are limited, and they contribute significantly to local tax bases that support schools and town services due to the high value of these homes. When families purchase near a lake, they are investing in both a lifestyle and the long-term health of the community. When recreational access is restricted without clear necessity, it can affect property values, local businesses, and overall economic stability. Buyers value consistency, and frequent rule changes create uncertainty for homeowners and lake users alike.

After reviewing the current rules, I believe they provide a fair and balanced framework that supports responsible recreation while protecting lakes and creating a safe environment. I encourage you to allow more lakes to establish designated wakesport zones where appropriate, while still preserving quiet-use lakes for those who prefer them. Reducing the number to only 18 lakes causes an extreme shift in buying opportunities and access.

I urge you to keep the current rules as they are. It seems only reasonable that the following lakes be allowed to keep their wakesport zones: Lake Fairlee, Lake Parker, Lake Holland, Lake Shadow, Lake Miles, and Lake Waterbury. Access and economic impact should be recognized in this process.

Echo Lake is a small lake. Its waters are currently clean. Unlike many other Vermont lakes, it has never had a milfoil infestation. It is also a sheltering space for many loons throughout the spring, summer, and fall. I see them almost every time I'm out and about on the lake. Given the size of Echo Lake, it is difficult to imagine maneuvering a high powered water craft without infringing upon them.

Balanced against these realities, why put the wants of a very small number of wakeboaters (and the industries that serve them) ahead of the health of the lake, the well being of the loons, and the vast majority of people living on Echo Lake who don't want to see or hear wakeboats ruining the peace and quiet? Please be responsible to our local wishes, not the lobbyists.

I write to you today with deep concern about proposed restrictions on wake boats in Vermont waters. Wake boats are recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard as safe, and there are no reports of accidents or citations related to wake boats. In contrast, fishing boats, personal watercraft, and pontoon boats have been involved in numerous safety incidents. This underscores the fact that wake boats, when operated responsibly, do not pose a unique safety risk in the water or on land.

Vermont's current rule is already one of the most restrictive in the country. We have operated within these boundaries while respecting other water users and protecting our environment. Further restrictions are unnecessary and unjust.

I strongly oppose the "Normal Use" definition of Vermont Waters as it pertains to wake boats. Towed watersports with inboard boats have been around since the 1990s (for over three decades). Wake surfing is an evolution of long-standing boating recreation, just as snowboarding evolved from skiing. Technology evolving does not make the activity a new use.

The facts are clear: wake boats have an exemplary safety record, they represent established recreational traditions, and Vermont's regulations are already extremely restrictive. Please keep the original rules. Do not let misinformation lead to policies that unfairly discriminate against safe, responsible recreation.

Please ban wake boats on Echo Lake in Charleston, VT. It is too small, and wake boats are dangerous for swimmers, kayakers, canoers, and wildlife.

We enjoy 145 feet frontage on Joe's Pond. Several years ago the first wake boat destroyed our entire water front. With the advice and approval of Kellie Merrill from the State of VT we had planted shrubs and other vegetation to protect the natural landscape. This was totally undermined by the operation of the first Wake Boat on the Pond to the point that to prevent further erosion we were forced to install 145 feet of rip rap at considerable expense to us. In addition the wake had banged up the boats we had at our dock and stirred up the water enough to make swimming unpleasant. In addition to the other concerns such as the degradation of wildlife habitat, there is now the Milfoil invasion of the Pond, which wake boats would not only spread the weed more widely in the Pond, but also be spread to other bodies of water by "dirty" boats. I understand the boat inspections and wash stations, but what about the otherwise unwitting canoeist or even fisherman who innocently launches his activity from the beach or even another camp waterfront? I would strongly support a wake boat ban on ANY Vermont waters.

Banning wakesports on Echo Lake will preserve its present status as one of Vermont's most pristine lakes. The hard work of a multitude of people will be rewarded.

My wife and I (age 77) frequently kayak on Lake Raponda in Wilmington. In the past we have also kayaked on Lake Champlain (once) and other lakes larger than Raponda and smaller than Champlain (several times). To our knowledge, we have never encountered any wake boats while kayaking. However, we have encountered considerable discomfort when confronted by abnormally large natural waves and the wakes of regular motorboats on various lakes. Having viewed videos of wake boats and the wakes and waves they produce, it is clear to us that regardless of where they were operating, wake boats would produce threats to both our safety and the ultimate enjoyment of the kayaking experience.

Hello — I'm writing to submit a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. My family spends time on this lake every summer, and it's an important part of our lives. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. Those goals matter to everyone who enjoys Vermont's lakes.

However, I'm concerned about the proposal as it is currently written. The new requirements — raising the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, requiring a 3,000-foot straight run, and applying a 500-foot buffer — introduce broad new standards that could significantly reduce access to wakesports. If the state is choosing these specific numbers, I believe the public deserves to see clear, Vermont-specific field data demonstrating that they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that already defines where wakesports are permitted.

I'm also concerned about aquatic invasive species (AIS) being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. Preventing AIS is extremely important, but the most effective solutions are strong statewide boat inspection programs, education, and enforcement that apply consistently to all trailered boats. AIS prevention should focus on measures that address the actual pathways of spread rather than singling out one activity.

I respectfully ask you to keep the current framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and to pursue targeted, evidence-based updates if changes are needed. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comment.

I am writing because I love fishing on Lake Fairlee, and I'm really worried about the proposed changes to the wakesports rules. I spend a lot of time on the lake, and it's one of my favorite places to be.

Almost every time I'm at Lake Fairlee, I'm out fishing, and I've seen firsthand that people who wakeboard, fish, swim, or just relax can all share the lake without problems.

From my experience, different users have been able to coexist respectfully. I don't think it's fair to change the rules in a way that would limit wakesports to only the largest lakes. I am able to fish anytime, even when wakesports is occurring. Lake Fairlee has a large space that is not even close to near the wakesport zone and frankly when I am fishing I am close to shore and I do not feel the effects of any wake.

If the concern is invasive species, restricting wakesports won't solve it. Invasive species like milfoil can be transported by any type of boat, not just wakeboats. The real issue is whether boats are properly cleaned before entering the water. If they are not, any vessel can carry it.

Changing wakesports rules will not prevent invasive species. Instead, it may push more boaters onto fewer lakes, potentially increasing congestion and pressure on those waters. A better solution would be to focus on ensuring that all boats are thoroughly cleaned and inspected before launching. That would protect Lake Fairlee and other Vermont lakes in a meaningful and effective way.

I care deeply about Lake Fairlee and the quality of its fishing. I want the lake to stay healthy, balanced, and enjoyable for everyone- fisherman and wakesurfers. Recreation evolves over time, and our public waters should remain accessible to all users as long as they are acting responsibly.

Please do not make changes that won't solve the real issue. Keep the current wakesports rules and focus on protecting the lake through stronger invasive species prevention and education efforts.

To the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed amendments to the Use of Public Water Rule regarding wakesports.

I support removing the additional 13 lakes from the list of waters allowing wakesports. These amendments are necessary to:

- Protect public safety by reducing hazardous wake conditions on smaller lakes where boat traffic and recreational swimmers share limited space
- Preserve water quality, as the large wakes generated by ballasted wake boats accelerate shoreline erosion and increase sediment suspension
- Prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, which can be transported in the specialized ballast systems these vessels use

Vermont's lakes are a shared resource that deserve protection. The proposed rule strikes an appropriate balance between allowing wakesports where suitable while protecting waters where these activities pose unacceptable risks.

Thank you for strengthening these important protections.

Sincerely,
Daniel Winograd-Cort

Wake boats are a threat to the health of clean lakes and to the safety and wellbeing of people and animals and should not be allowed in Vermont's small lakes, including Echo Lake in East Charleston. We have worked hard to protect and maintain our water quality through substantial investment of time and funds, and allowing wake boats, with their substantial risk of spreading invasive species and disrupting shorelines, places lake health at significant risk.

Furthermore, we have nesting loons in two sections of the lake whose nesting sites would also be disrupted and potentially abandoned.

Finally, there are almost no areas of the lake where a wakeboat can travel safely without causing wake and disrupting the use of the lake by small boat users. This summer, in intense drought, made that an even more visible reality.

Please restrict use of wake boats to locations better suited to their size- Memphremagog and Champlain.

SUBJECT: LEAVE WAKESPORTS ALONE

Please leave the current wakesports rules unchanged. I have been closely following guidelines across New England, and I currently own a lake house in New Hampshire, where the rules are far less restrictive- a 150-foot setback from shore with no minimum depth requirement.

I am particularly concerned about some of the statements made during recent hearings, which I feel are exaggerated and factually inaccurate. My family is very familiar with wakesports and enjoys a variety of water activities in New Hampshire. Since Vermont already has the strictest rules in the nation, further restrictions seem unnecessary.

One comment that stood out was about sound, where it was stated that wakeboats can be “heard before they are seen.” This is simply not true. Scientific data shows that modern wakeboats are actually quieter than older models, as their exhaust systems discharge noise below the water’s surface. As a fellow lakefront owner, I can attest that the loudest and most startling noises come from fishing boats racing across the lake, or from camp boats with kids on tubes and counselors playing music. Yet, these are part of the enjoyment of lake life, laughter, friends, family, and active recreation. Singling out wakeboats for more restrictions is neither fair nor consistent with public access to state waters. Restricting access to public water is not fair or legal; everyone should be able to use the waters as recreation evolves.

Additionally, I strongly oppose the proposed definition of “Normal Use” of Vermont Waters as it relates to wakeboats. Towed watersports with inboard boats have existed since the 1990s. The evolution of technology does not make these activities “new uses.” Wakesurfing is simply a continuation of long-standing boating recreation, and the current rules already allow this activity safely and responsibly. Vermont’s lakes are shared spaces. The existing rules balance safety, environmental protection, and recreation. Please maintain the current regulations and allow all users to continue enjoying our public waters responsibly.

As a fisherman and fishing boat owner, I am satisfied with the existing 2024 regulations and am writing to formally address the lack of scientific justification for the proposed wakesports rule amendments. The proposal represents a shift away from evidence and toward a subjective, petition-driven approach that undermines the progress achieved in 2024. The increase from 50 to 100 acres has been introduced without supporting ecological and safety studies, and the Agency has provided no data explaining why 100 acres is necessary while intermediate sizes like 60 or 80 acres are inadequate. Similarly, the 3,000-foot run requirement lacks industry standard support and hydrodynamic analysis demonstrating superior environmental protection.

The proposed 500-foot safety buffer presents significant practical problems. Expecting boaters to accurately estimate a distance from every object is unrealistic and unenforceable. When regulations exceed reasonable visual assessment capabilities, they do not improve safety they create conditions for unintentional violations and unnecessary conflicts among water users.

Policy must be grounded in impact studies and empirical data. Because the state has not provided this scientific foundation, I strongly urge the Agency to maintain current standards and prioritize data over responses to advocacy group pressure.

As Real Estate agent for the past 15 years. I am committed to working with families to find their forever homes and I can tell you when it comes to Lake front properties access to water recreation is a major factor in their decisions. Lakefront properties are limited, and they contribute significantly to local tax bases that support schools and town services due to the high value of these homes. When families purchase near a lake, they are investing not only in property but in a place they can spend time with their families doing what they love to do.

When recreational access is restricted without clear necessity, it can negatively affect property values, local businesses, and overall economic stability. Buyers want to know that when they buy a home the rules of the lake do not change year to year. After seeing rules put into place in 2024, why is there another round of rules being presented. The current rules are working

The existing 2024 regulations allowed 30 lakes to access waksurfing and now the new rules allow for only 18 and form what I see the new rules are not based on science.

The increase from 50 to 100 acres has been introduced without supporting ecological or safety studies. The Agency has provided no data explaining why 100 acres is necessary, while intermediate sizes such as 50 acres would be insufficient. Similarly, the 3,000-foot straight run requirement lacks support and hydrodynamic analysis demonstrating any more superior environmental protection.

The proposed 500-foot safety buffer presents practical challenges. Expecting boaters to accurately estimate a distance from every object is unrealistic and unenforceable. When regulations exceed reasonable visual assessment capabilities, they do not improve safety they create conditions for unintentional violations and unnecessary conflicts among water users.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the Agency to maintain the 2024 standards, which provide a balanced, enforceable, and evidence-based framework for responsible wakesport use. Policy decisions should be guided by data, practicality, and fairness for all lake users.

I support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. I am concerned about swimmer and boater safety, invasive species spread, erosion issues, and impact to loons, fish, and other non-humans who rely on the Waterbury Reservoir to survive. Thank you for your consideration.

Wakeboats should be banned on Waterbury Reservoir! Much of the lake is already posted for no wake, so the open area will concentrate the wakeboats and just about make it imposible to access quieter areas of the lake by canoe or kayak.

I am writing to express my opposition to the rule as currently written regarding the temporary suspension of wakesports eligibility. While I support the protection of our environment, any administrative suspension for lake management, research, or restoration must include clear safeguards to ensure it remains temporary and transparent.

I am requesting that the rule be revised to include specific requirements: suspensions must be based on documented, project-specific necessity showing that wakesports would directly interfere with a project. The scope of any restriction should be limited to the smallest geographic area and the shortest timeframe possible. To prevent these measures from becoming permanent without oversight, no suspension should exceed six months or one boating season without a formal rulemaking review.

Furthermore, these suspensions should not be imposed more than once within a 48-month period, except in cases of natural emergencies like flooding. Any such decision must require written findings by the Secretary supported by scientific documentation and should automatically expire unless renewed through a public process. These safeguards ensure that decisions are science-based and that access to public waters is not incrementally removed through administrative processes.

Additionally, I strongly oppose the increase to a 100-acre minimum. The original 2022 petition itself cited 60 acres, yet the current proposal jumps to 100 without new evidence. Lake acreage is a matter of math, not environmental response. Wake energy does not change based on the total surface size of a lake; it is a function of depth and distance from shore. The 100-acre threshold is a policy tool designed to remove lakes by definition rather than by demonstrated impact. I urge the Agency to maintain the current standards.

Greetings - I have property that overlooks Echo Lake in East Charleston, VT and my family has a cottage on the lake itself. We value the rural nature of the lake and East Charleston itself and wish to preserve that pristine nature - that includes the peace and quiet that the region allows. The sonic distortion that wake board sports creates is very unsettling and disturbs to a great extent the environment that anyone living or vacationing there wants and needs. Please limit the watercraft that create such sonic disturbances. Thank you

I am writing to you today with a sincere desire to understand the scientific and practical framework behind the proposed changes to Vermont's wakesport regulations. I value the work the Agency does to protect our waters, but to ensure these rules are respected and effective, they must be rooted in transparent, peer-reviewed data. As a member of the boating community, I am asking for clarity on several points where there appears to be a significant gap between the proposed thresholds and established science.

First, regarding the 100-acre threshold, it appears this number originates from a rectangular area model—a spatial visualization of a boat's path—rather than a hydrodynamic measurement. Because lake acreage is a mathematical calculation and not an environmental response, I have the following questions:

What specific Vermont-based field evidence links total lake surface area to biological or ecological impacts?

Why is 100 acres considered a "safe" threshold when 60, 70, or 80 acres is not?

Can the Agency provide a study that measures sediment disturbance, turbidity, or shoreline erosion relative to the total acreage of a lake, rather than just distance from shore?

The University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory research, which is frequently cited, focuses on wave energy and attenuation with distance. It does not address acreage-based impacts. If wake energy is a function of physics—specifically depth and distance—how does the total surface size of the lake alter the way a wake interacts with the shoreline? Without this data, the 100-acre rule looks like a policy tool designed to eliminate specific lakes by definition rather than addressing measured impacts. Beyond the science, I am concerned about regulatory accountability. The 2024 rules have only been in place for a single full season. Before adding more layers of restriction, we must ensure that the current laws are actually being communicated to the public.

Are the 2024 rules fully incorporated into the official Vermont Boater Education materials and the state licensing exam?

What is the State's plan to ensure that general boaters—who often struggle to judge the current 250-foot distance—can accurately identify a 500-foot buffer?

Has the Agency considered that regulatory expansion without proper education undermines public trust and creates a landscape of unintentional violations?

I truly believe that for rules to work, they must be data-driven and evenly applied. I urge the Agency to maintain the current standards and focus on robust public education until site-specific evidence can prove that these new, much more restrictive thresholds are an environmental necessity.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to seek these clarifications.

I live on Echo Lake in East Charleston, VT. I enjoy being on the water in my kayak, swimming, and using the paddle board. Wake boat sports would pose a danger to me, my neighbors, and my family and friends because that would pose a safety risk during our use of the lake especially if the zone is less than 100 acres with a 3,000 foot run. Expanding the buffer zone to 500 feet would help protect wild life, especially nesting loons. Our lake water currently is pristine. Not many other lakes in the country can boast that. Additionally, wake boats pose a risk of contaminating our lake by invasive species. Residual water in ballast tanks of wake boats could spread invasive species. It is difficult to clean those tanks and very few washing stations are available for boat owners to adequately clean them. There does not seem to be any money to build the required washing stations and have enough available to make stations that are conveniently accessible. The risks to all out weigh the benefits for a few. I support the proposed changes but do not think they go far enough to protect lakes such as Echo Lake.

scottbvt@gmail.com

I believe that wakesport boats should not be allowed on the Waterbury Reservoir. Their use is unfair to other boaters and damaging to the natural habitat of the many species that make their home in or on the Waterbury Reservoir.

I own and pay the taxes on property on Sunset Lake, in Benson/Orwell, Vermont, and am a member of the Sunset Sunrise Lake-Perch Pond Association.

I support the DEC proposed rule changes for wakesports on Vermont lakes. I also support strengthening those changes, as proposed by the Responsible Wakes for VT Lakes (RWVL).

To protect the ecology of smaller lakes like ours, we absolutely need the minimum of a 100-acre wakesport zone and a 3,000-ft run. The large wakes from boats used for wakesurfing would cause considerable damage to shoreline plants, nesting birds such as loons, and bottom sediment, as well as property damage to docks and moored boats. When those boats are brought in from other lakes, they are likely to introduce invasive species, which can overwhelm the delicate balance of life on smaller lakes.

Our lakes are used mostly by swimmers, kayakers, paddleboards, small fishing craft, and a few larger boats for tubing, and safety is an issue for all of them. The high bow of a wakesport boat at full speed reduces visibility ahead of the boat and puts swimmers and smaller craft at risk, not only of serious injury, but also of being overturned by the large wake. The proposed safety buffer of 500 feet should really be increased to 700 feet as proposed by RWVL, which would protect the shoreline's safety and ecology.

Our pristine lakes provide enjoyment for kayakers, swimmers, paddlers and, for lucky fishermen, food! Ruin of these pastimes would adversely affect property values, tourism and local businesses. Please help preserve and protect our lakes by enacting the proposed changes.

Carol R. Little
8 Trout Bay Road
Benson, VT 05743

I am writing to express concern that the minimum 20' depth proposed for wakeboard use is not enough. Lake Morey, our home, is undergoing critical and expensive management of Cyanobacteria (a severe danger to humans and animals). Newer studies indicate that, at a 20' depth, the recently applied alum layer to contain the Cyanobacteria, could be disturbed. If this happens, all water sports including wake boating would cease on our lake! I believe the minimum depth should be substantially increased.

Furthermore the safety of wakeboating near others enjoying the lake must be addressed. Wakeboard should be required to keep a minimum distance of 500' from others in order to on the water, as well as from the shoreline, to keep children and adults safe.

I am writing to you today with a deep commitment to keeping all of Vermont's beautiful lakes safe and accessible for everyone. I care profoundly about the health of our waters, which is why I am concerned that the proposed changes to wakesport regulations are misdirected. I worry they overlook the most critical issue facing our precious lakes: Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS).

It appears the conversation around wakesport boats is being unfairly linked to the spread of AIS. This feels like a "backdoor" attempt to regulate one specific activity, while the broader problem of invasive species—which affects every person who touches the water—is not being addressed effectively. Singling out wakeboats is a distraction from the root cause. The truth is, any vessel can carry invasive species, and AIS was a significant threat to Vermont long before wakeboats or wakesurfing became popular.

Instead of limiting the number of lakes for wakesports—which only concentrates more boaters and the potential for AIS onto fewer, more crowded bodies of water—our efforts should focus on comprehensive decontamination, education, and robust enforcement for all watercraft, motorized and non-motorized alike.

Furthermore, I am concerned about the proposed increase from 50 to 100 acres. From a gentle and practical perspective, there has been no clear explanation as to why 100 acres is considered "safe" while 80- 90 is not. This change disproportionately eliminates specific lakes where families have safely recreated for years.

I also have serious concerns regarding the 500-foot safety buffer. In a shared-use environment, safety must be our priority. However, the general boating public often does not have a clear visual sense of what 500 feet (the length of nearly two football fields) looks like on open water. Without proper education for all boaters, these markers can become points of confusion rather than safety.

We all share the goal of keeping our lakes clean for generations to come. Let's focus on the real issue of AIS with a plan that applies to everyone, rather than using wakeboats as a convenient scapegoat. I urge you to keep the current 2024 rules in place and focus on the universal challenges we face together.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit public comment regarding the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments. After reviewing the proposed changes and supporting materials, I am writing to express my opposition to the 100-acre lake threshold, the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, the expanded 500-foot buffer from any object, the non-normal use definition, and the administrative revisions in sections 3.7 and 4.3. I support maintaining the 2024 rule as it was originally written.

The primary scientific sources cited in the proposal, including research from the University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory, evaluate how wake energy attenuates over distance and depth, particularly in relation to shorelines. However, the proposed amendments translate that general science into rigid regulatory thresholds that the research itself does not establish.

For example, the studies examine how wakes diminish relative to shorelines and nearby vessels. The proposal expands this into a 500-foot exclusion zone around "any object." The cited research does not define "object," nor does it analyze buoys, swimmers, or other floating items to justify a 360-degree buffer. This appears to be a policy expansion rather than a scientific necessity, and it creates practical compliance and enforcement challenges.

The 3,000-foot straight-run requirement similarly reflects boating practice rather than an environmental metric. No study links sediment movement or habitat impact to the linear distance a boat travels. Wake energy is influenced by depth and distance from shore, not by the total length of a straight path. Without direct evidence showing environmental benefit tied to 3,000 feet, this requirement functions as a restriction on access rather than a data-supported safeguard.

The 100-acre lake threshold is based on geometric modeling of available space, not environmental response. Wake behavior does not change simply because a lake crosses a surface-area boundary. Energy dissipation depends on depth and shoreline setback, not total acreage. Using acreage as a cutoff removes lakes categorically rather than evaluating site-specific characteristics.

I also disagree with classifying wakesports as a non-normal use. Towed watersports behind inboard motorboats clearly predate 1993. Ballast-modified towboats and wake-enhancing practices existed before that date, and wakesurfing emerged in the late 1980s. The law was intended to prevent entirely novel uses, not to freeze technology at 1993 standards. Improvements in equipment within a longstanding recreational category do not create a new legal use.

Regarding sections 3.7 and 4.3, shifting lake eligibility to administrative discretion raises concerns about incremental access removal without formal rulemaking. Any temporary suspension should be limited to one boating season, supported by documented scientific necessity, and automatically expire unless renewed through a transparent public process. Safeguards are essential to prevent temporary measures from becoming indefinite prohibitions.

In May 2024, the Agency stated that the existing rule was science-based and reflective of shared interests. The current proposals move beyond the scope of cited research without presenting corresponding Vermont-specific field data demonstrating harm under the 2024 framework.

Vermont Boater Education also presents a regulatory implementation and accountability concern.

Before adding restrictions, the State must ensure existing rules are fully implemented, clearly communicated, and incorporated into official boater education and enforcement training. Regulatory expansion without proper education undermines compliance, fairness, and public trust.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Agency retain the 2024 rule structure and reject the proposed amendments.

I support the DEC's changes in response to mine and others concerns about boater & swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion. I support without flexibility or compromise increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run) as well as expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures. As someone who lives right not the lake I feel passionate about protecting the health and safety of the lake and everyone who accesses it.

I live on Joes Pond and I strongly urge that you adopt the changes to wake sport use that expand the size of ponds and lakes that these horrible boats are used on. We have a small pond with many camps, swimmers, kayakers, and loons all of which are at risk with the surf created by these boats.

We already have detected milfoil on joes pond and the wake created by them will spread it at a greater rate and larger area. The land owners shorelines are ripped up by the wakes created, which we are left with the cost of fixing...if we can get a permit. Please protect our small lakes and ponds from these destructive boats. I know I've written many letters to many people and departments in support of limiting wake boat use. Please listen to the people that want to protect our fragile ecosystem.

As a Vermont resident and avid boater owner powered and non powered, I oppose changes to the current rules on wakeboard boats adopted in 2024.

The agency hasn't given time to evaluate what it already adopted.

Much of the data scientific presented from the agency is from outside sources, non of it is from state data, research, or measurements.

The 500 foot rule is a major safety issue and invitation for serious controversy among boaters.

Having a wake boat stay 500 ft from any vessel and the other boaters can come within this 500 ft makes absolutely no sense. Controversial boaters will maintain this distance just to shut down all wakeboarding. This would be a major problem on the water.

Educating the public is also a major issue. Are the current rules in the boating safety courses?

Have anyone in the agency measured what a 3000ft run actually is. There could be an obstacle in a lake that would prevent this. An island, sand bar, thick weeds, etc. no two bodies in Vermont are identical.

This also applies to the 100 acres needed to support wakeboard. There are bodies of water less than 109 acres that can support wakeboarding without problems.

Lastly, I certainly hope you spend the time to read the comments presented. That you are open minded and see wakeboarding a family sport. It does not dominate a body of water. Wakeboats rarely travel from lake to lake. They stay on their own lakes. Some lakes and ponds have only 1 wakeboard on it.

Many boat manufacturers create boats with towers. Those individuals who are not aware of this think every boat with a tower is a wakeboat. We really need education to the public before more rules.

There will always be conspiracies and false statements presented and backed up by groups with self-serving agendas. Often this is centered on conflict of interest .

Our bodies of water in Vermont are for public use and enjoyment for all boaters and families. There is room for everyone without major constrictions to one user.

There is so much hatred, controversy, and unrest in our country right now, why are we just adding more. Leave the rules adopted in 2024 as they were.

As the Director of Ohana Family Camp, wake boats are detrimental to the programming and safe guarding of our family campers and guests on Lake Fairlee. We have anywhere between 70-100 family members each week with a total near 650 across the summer. In addition our guests of facility rentals make use of our waterfront with 10 different events over spring and fall, roughly 70-100 guests each time using the waterfront.

Our camps utilize non-motorized boats (sailing, canoeing, kayaking, paddleboards) and swimming to enjoy their summer lake experience in a peaceful and safe manner. Wake boats pose a threat and therefore make it more difficult to enjoy their time on the lake. For many participants it's likely their first experience of lake swimming/boating/sailing. We try to be very intentional about nurturing a fun and safe experience, if waves/commotion causes mishap and fear it impacts our ability to do this.

Staff facilitating lessons while wake boats are present decrease confidence and comfort levels in their ability to teach. The increased challenge for staff to encourage a willingness in campers to try new activities and develop skillsets, along with developing a love of the lake and general ecosystem. Examples of incidents or injury include campers being knocked off paddleboards due to wake boat waves, kayaks capsizing, sailboat booms swinging if knocked off course due to waves and notably long-distance swimmers not feeling safe going out into the lake. Long held traditions are being threatened.

Please uphold the reconditions without compromise, they are designed for a reason.

Harvey Lake is way too small for wake boards. It disrupts the shore line dismantles the parked boats. It is an aggressive way to have fun!

As a longtime resident of Lake Morey and a parent of young kids who swim, paddle, and sail in the lake I am deeply concerned about safety and long term consequences of wake sports on our waters, including shore erosion and the spread of invasive species. I support the DEC's proposed changes, including increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise and expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures. Things a good start, but these measures don't go far enough to protect the lake or its inhabitants.

ANR has my full support regarding the recrafting of a few Use of Public Waters Rules that they feel necessary to accommodate protection of our waters. Our rivers, lakes and ponds do not know what State they are in. AIS are winning. At some point in time, we may need to form a collaborative effort with all our immediate neighbors, specifically Quebec, New Hampshire, North-Western Massachusetts, and Eastern upstate New York.

Working together and combining ideas, efforts, resources and goals could provide us a more thoughtful and lasting voice. Examples already exist. Interstate “rails to trails” biking organizations have come together, Interstate highways go through many states, and many more cross-state agreements work. And the granddaddy of them all, the Appalachian Trail, the world’s longest “hiking-only” trail is another example: 2,190 miles through 14 states, from Georgia, thru Vermont, to Maine. States worked together to craft rules that have created and protected this famous asset since 1937. Some of these were hard fought wins but pause for a few seconds --- look at what was achieved.

Anglers are among our most supportive folks when it comes to protecting lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Anglers love that quiet cove and the sound of their hook making an almost silent splash. They often stand in rushing streams, casting and connecting with waters in ways that few other users do. Anglers remind us of the value of clean waters.

We can do this. What better achievement than to leave future generations with clean lakes? We should not view this as being a radical direction to go in. Boats should be launchable between states that agree on sensible regulations. No waters should be sacrificed for the sole purpose of personal pleasure if that pleasure is at the expense of healthy waters.

We must address both the “Interstate and intrastate boat issues.” We already know what we need to know to do what we need to do.

- We know that AIS are transported between lakes and states.
- We know that once AIS are introduced to a lake, AIS are virtually impossible to remove. They own the lake.
- We know that we need strict AIS decontamination policies.
- We know that AIS issues will not be solved on their own.
- We know that the next boating season is around the corner.
- We know that folks in neighboring states are as concerned about Vermont’s infestations as we are about their infestations.
- We know that enacting restrictive AIS in one state, or in one area of one state, is not sufficient.
- We know that we are losing the AIS battle. Perhaps more needs to be made of it. Some of our largest and most beautiful lakes have very unpleasant AIS problems. What can we do to help situations like this? How can we lend more protection to lakes that are working hard to stave these critters off?

To simply continue as is, means that we will be watching, feeling, ignoring the inevitable outcome of taking only minimal, and in some cases, no preventative action. We will continue to watch slow, painful deaths, as invasives squeeze oxygen and life from our lakes.

And finally – to all of you at ANR:

Thank you for this opportunity to post some comments, concerns and ideas. Those of us “out in the field” are very aware of the difficult work on your plates. The scrambling for funds, responding to our letters, the occasional – perhaps at times frequent verbal criticisms, and more. Please know that your work generates more compliments than complaints. Perhaps some feel that they look stronger when they complain, and weaker when they express compliments. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

We feel that we are part of your team, and we continue to believe that our ongoing relationship and mutual passion for protecting our region's natural resources will continue to benefit our mutual goals.

Respectfully,

Eric Chittenden
Waterbury Center, Vermont

My family and I have visited Lake Fairlee for eight summers. We return often because of its serenity, its clean water, and the confidence it gives our son and his friend(s) to explore independently. It is where our son learned to kayak and gradually paddled farther on his own. That independence is possible because Lake Fairlee has long been a calm-water lake. The introduction of wake boats would fundamentally change that safety.

Lake Fairlee is approximately 90 acres. Wake boats are specifically engineered to generate amplified waves using ballast systems that can add 1,000–3,000 pounds of weight. According to research from the University of Minnesota’s St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (2022), wake-surf boats produce waves significantly larger and more powerful than traditional recreational boats, with greater energy that travels farther before dissipating. On smaller lakes, that energy reflects off shorelines rather than dispersing, increasing cumulative impact.

Shoreline erosion is not simply cosmetic. Studies conducted by Wisconsin Lakes and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have found that enhanced wakes accelerate bank erosion and contribute to sediment resuspension in shallow areas.¹ When bottom sediments are disturbed, phosphorus that has settled on the lakebed can be released back into the water column. Elevated phosphorus is a primary driver of harmful algal blooms and declining water clarity. Small lakes are especially vulnerable because they have less open-water “fetch” to absorb wave energy.

Research and state guidance in multiple regions recommend that wake-enhanced boating occur in water at least 15–20 feet deep and several hundred feet from shore to reduce bottom disturbance and shoreline impact.² On a 90-acre lake, maintaining that distance consistently is challenging. The smaller the lake, the more difficult it becomes to separate high-energy wake activity from open water swimmers, kayakers, anglers, and shorelines.

There are also safety concerns. Kayaks and paddleboards have low stability in steep, closely spaced wakes. On a confined lake, wave rebound from shore can compound this effect, creating unpredictable conditions. Families who have long relied on Lake Fairlee as a safe place for children to paddle and swim would face a very different environment.

The proposed 100-acre minimum exists for a reason. Acreage thresholds reflect scientific understanding of wave dissipation, user safety buffers, and shoreline protection. Allowing wake boats on lakes that don't meet standards may undermine scientific lake management and weaken protections for Vermont's smaller lakes.

For over a century, families and campers have come to Lake Fairlee for quiet recreation and connection with nature. We cherish mornings when we hear loons across the water and see eagles overhead. Our son has enjoyed his growing independence with fishing the clean waters from his kayak. These experiences depend on protecting the lake’s ecological health and peaceful character.

Larger lakes better suited to wake-enhanced boating exist, where participants can gather with others who share that activity and operate with reduced environmental risk. With an area of 90 acres, Lake Fairlee does not fit that description.

I respectfully urge you to uphold the 100-acre guideline and veto this proposal. Protecting Lake Fairlee now will preserve its water quality, shoreline integrity, wildlife habitat, and safe recreational use for generations to come.

1. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources & Wisconsin Lakes (2019–2021). Research summaries on wake boat impacts and shoreline erosion.

2. University of Minnesota St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (2022). “Physical and Environmental Impacts of Wake Boats.”

3. Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Guidance on nutrient loading and phosphorus impacts in small lakes.

I support the proposed rule change for Statewide Wakesport use. The increased size of the wake, caused by these boats, has an impact on lake health, erosion, and community safety. Please adopt these new rules.

Linda.J.Patchett@gmail.com

Our beloved lake--Echo Lake--is waaaaaay too small for wake boats. The pristine shores, which we have worked for decades to preserve for the health of the lake waters and the general surrounding ecosystem, would be put at GRAVE risk by the massive and destructive wake boats waves. PLEASE, live up to the Department's mission: help us protect our lake!

I live part time on Lake Salem and I love it for the quiet, calm, environment. Since wakeboard boats have started using the lake I have noticed an increase in noise, and larger waves. The large wake generated by these boats can make it difficult to navigate other boats which share the water, especially kayaks and canoes. Wakeboats also make it difficult to swim, or use floatation devices safely. I'm also concerned about how these boats may increase shoreline erosion. Salem is geographically situated between two very large bodies of water, therefore providing easily assessable alternatives for wakeboats. I believe Lake Salem is too small to safely allow the use of wakeboats.

Yes, the waves from wakeboats are, at best, inconvenient, and at worst, dangerous, disturbing the enjoyment of many others for the benefit of the enjoyment of the few. But the waves will eventually dissipate.

The environmental damage is more severe and long-lasting. Their waves can do damage to the shorelines and flora near the shore. They can bring invasive species, which will never be able to be eradicated, devolving the existing ecosystem.

You know all of this, and yet, by my understanding, your plan for mitigating these risks are untimely and underfunded.

As a long-term stakeholder, I please ask that you reconsider the rules you have planned to put into place for approved lakes.

Thank you.

I strongly support the proposed new requirements for a wakesport zone 500 feet from shore and at least 3000 feet long, with a total area of at least 100 acres. However, especially on smaller lakes, docks, swim platforms, moorings, and other fixed in water buoys such as for a ski course should be taken into account such that the zone should be 500 feet from them and not just the shore (per 3.7 (c) An individual shall not engage in wakesports within 500 feet of an individual in the water, a canoe, rowboat, or other vessel; an anchored or moored vessel containing any individual; or anchorage of docks.) Also, on smaller lakes the wakesport zone may take up the bulk of the lake area away from shore, precluding any other boating while a wake boat is operating.

Consideration should also be given to precluding wakeboats from lakes that do not have invasive species currently to prevent spread to those pristine lakes. It is difficult to guarantee complete flushing to ballast tanks when boats transfer from lake to lake.

Each year new wake boats are designed to produce larger and larger wakes. One recent study suggested the buffer zone for the latest model boats should be 600 feet. The regulations may need to be revised again next year to take that into account.

Please strongly consider the effect that the sport of wakeboarding already has on bodies of water in the state of Vermont. It crowds out swimmers, recreational paddlers, and can inundate loon nests and destroy or displace an entire season's brood. By virtue of its ballast tank fills, empties, and refills, it serves as a vector to transfer micro-plants and invasive species between bodies of water, further spreading them to new host-bodies of water. There is no way to regulate, or certify that a tank has been adequately disinfected before the boat is trailered to a new spot. Filled wakeboard tanks push their powerful hydraulic wake deeper, which stir up stableized silt, phosphorous, and plant matter back into the water, contributing to plankton growth and clarity issues.

Wakeboarding boats should be restricted to only bodies of water large enough, deep enough, and monitored for adherence to state rules. They should not be "confined" to operate in "safe" zones on smaller waterways - they simply will not comply if no one is enforcing the rules. They require a lot of space, depth, and speed which is incompatible with the smaller lakes & ponds that self-powered watercraft users prefer.

Wakeboarding and traditional water-skiing are very different sports, use different equipment, and have very different environmental effects. For this reason, present wakeboard operational restrictions are not at all adequate and must be revised to only include larger, deeper and less-vulnerable waterways. Thanks for your attention, coming from a recreational kayaker/canoer/camper of 33 years here in the state of Vermont.

Good Folks, We applaud your efforts to strengthen rules around wake boats on Vermont waters. Please adopt the proposed new rules which will better serve the majority of citizens using the lakes. These are a positive development.

Thank you!

Thank you for considering my public comment. I support tougher regulation of wake boats on Vermont lakes. We frequent a lake in Fairlee where wake boats are allowed. I feel unsafe with my children in the public recreation area due to the proximity of these boats to swimmers, kayakers, and other recreational users. We frequently see people driving these boats in a way that endangers other people and wildlife, specifically the loons that nest on the lake. Allowing this use on a lake that is too small to support it, allows a minority of users to engage in an activity on the water that detracts from its public use and enjoyment by many. It is especially detrimental to the wildlife that call this area home.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns I and others have raised about boater and swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion.

I am strongly in favor of increasing the minimum wakesports zone to at least 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). I hope there will not be any compromising on this.

I also am very much in favor of expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet - OR MORE - from other users or in water structures. We have small children in our family who could be in danger if a large wake were to be generated only 200 feet from shore.

February 16, 2026

Dear ANR, Lakes and Ponds and DEC Representatives,

I respectfully submit this formal comment as a Vermont property owner and lifetime boater and water sport and recreation enthusiast.

After review of the proposed rule amendments, supporting materials and the limited scientific research presented as to the basis for the changes, I formally oppose the following proposed standards, specifically the increase to 100 contiguous acres and the requirement of a 3,000 foot straight run as well as the expansion of the buffer to 500 feet from any object while in the wakesport zone.

My opposition is on two items:

The first is that by increasing these items above, the number of lakes available decreased from 30 to 18. To reduce the number of available lakes from 30 to 18 under the new proposed Rule only makes AIS a more foreseeable byproduct as wake boats currently allowed in 30 lakes will be forced from their home lakes to one of the 18 lakes in Vermont or nearby states giving rise to the potential of transferring AIS back to their home lake. With no complaints or violations from the initial rule for wake boats there is no justification to enact more restrictive rules that move to a reduced lake count in Vermont thereby increasing the likelihood of AIS spread in our state lakes.

AIS policy should be vector based and system wide grounded in measured and scientific data. Public water rules must be evidence-based, transparent, and proportional. These proposals exceed the 2024 compromise and lack Vermont-specific empirical support.

The other item is that when compared to other water sport activities such as skiing, tubing, wake boarding, wake surfing is by far the slowest and least likely to cause a boating accident. To place the burden on the wake boat to stay 500 feet away from any object while in the wakesport zone puts the wake boat at a significant disadvantage as compared to other boats enjoying high speed activities on Vermont's lakes.

I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments and ask that regulatory standards remain proportional, evidence based and clearly tied to demonstrated ecological need rather than advocacy pressure from a small group of constituents. It is important that we all share the beautiful environmental assets that Vermont has and continue to manage them fairly and consistently for the benefit of all.

Thank you for your time and consideration of all the voices on this important topic.

Sincerely,

Dawn Edgar
46 Farm Ridge Road
Ludlow, VT 05149

Wave attenuation research asks: How far must a wave travel to diminish to a reference condition? That is a distance-based question. The Minnesota study and related wake physics work do not define an

acreage threshold at which wake impacts change. A wake does not “know” the size of the lake; it attenuates based on: •Wave energy and period •Water depth •Distance traveled •Interaction with shoreline Therefore, a rule requiring 100 acres is not traceable to wave attenuation science.

I support the DEC's changes in response to my concerns about boater and swimmer safety, invasive species spread and shoreline erosion. I grew up on Echo Lake and I care deeply about keeping this beautiful resource clean and safe for future generations. I have seen what milfoil does to our lakes and I do not want any more lakes to contract this problem. Additionally, I am a string swimmer and have often enjoyed swimming across the lake and back and I have had some very huge boats and wakes make me fearful of doing this anymore.

I support the proposed new rule.

I do not believe that wake boats are appropriate for use on Echo Lake. The lake is too small and wake boats will churn up our clear water, disrupt loons and loon nests, further erode our banks, disrupt latent nutrients in the lake bed that fuel algae blooms (we have started to see algae blooms later in the summer), disrupt fishing boats, swimmers, kayaks, and paddle boarders, and introduce a whole new risk in terms of invasive species.

I am a volunteer for the Echo Lake Protective Association, and as the treasurer, I spend a lot of time figuring out how we will be able to pay for mitigation costs related to when we do find invasive species in our lake. Wake boats, for this small, pristine lake, add an additional danger due to the difficulty of fully checking for invasives. Also, our water level was down several feet at the end of the summer in 2025. I had never seen the water so low, and this would add to the risks of churning up nutrients and encouraging dangerous algae blooms. We are going to undoubtedly experience more changes to the lake due to climate change, and wake boats will make our volunteer jobs protecting Echo Lake even more difficult and frankly, more depressing.

I fully support stronger restrictions on wakeboarding. There are plenty of ways to enjoy the waters of our state already. Wakeboarding is very intrusive and damaging to the flora and fauna of our beautiful waterways and the fragile ecosystems they house. Please do your job and protect Vermont waters. I am a resident of West Fairlee and a frequent user of Lake Fairlee in the summer as an open water swimmer and kayaker.

What makes open water activities dangerous is unpredictable conditions, and it is my belief that allowing wake sports on Lake Fairlee creates unpredictable conditions for others recreating on the lake. Last summer, during a routine afternoon swim, I encountered a wake created from a wake boat engaging in wake sports. I felt unsafe, like I couldn't be seen despite my neon pink safety float, and immediately returned to a small pocket of the lake where I could be protected from the conditions.

For the remainder of the summer, I largely avoided swimming in afternoon hours which would increase my odds of encountering such wakes again. I believe that most of the recreators on Lake Fairlee do not have the swimming expertise and skillfulness that I do to remain safe in the waters while wake sports are being engaged. As a professional athlete, I can appreciate the sporting aspect of wake boats and wake sports, but I feel they are meant for larger lakes - not a lake like Lake Fairlee, whose swimmers, kayakers and paddlers consist largely of young kids attending summer camps. Just one wake boat jeopardizes the safety of tens of patrons on the lake.

In summary, I wholeheartedly support the changes, but they do not go far enough.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates.

Hi there! First, I should acknowledge I'm an avid wakeboarder and I'm generally in favor of open recreational access. With that said, as someone who also enjoys paddleboarding and nearby loon habitat, there's a place for motor boats and more specifically those with wake size bolstered by ballast systems — and it's large bodies of water. I live on Lake Iroquois and I'm in firm support of stricter wakeboat regulation. And to be frank, if someone can afford a \$100,000 boat, they can afford to trailer it somewhere suitable for its use.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns my family and others have raised about boater and swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion.

I am strongly in favor of increasing the minimum wakesports zone to at least 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). I hope there will not be any compromising on this.

I also am very much in favor of expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet - OR MORE - from other users or in water structures. We have little kids and older adults in our family who could be in danger from large wakes.

I am writing to encourage a ban on wakesport boats and wakesurfing on Echo Lake in Charleston, VT. My family owns lakefront property and we enjoy the quiet lake in the summertime. We do a lot of kayaking, sailing, row boating, canoeing on the lake and all of these activities would be adversely affected by wakesport boats and wakesurfing.

This includes concerns over:

Public Safety, Environmental Damage, and Limited Visibility. Particularly concerning are the large waves generated for the safety of other boaters and the large amount of ballast water introducing invasive species.

It is unconscionable that ANR is willing to allow Wake Boats , and their ballasts onto pristine lakes. The risk of invasive species entering the lakes as a result is much greater than from our current threats. Because there is no requirement for a wake boat operator to use in real time the map, created by the State, of the approved wake boat zone on phones, wake boats will stray from the approved zone. On Echo Lake that means a significantly elevated risk of stirring up legacy phosphorous, and increased risk of being near our nesting loons. Change the proposed rule. Require operators to show access greeters that they have the on their phone a working zone map. Without it no entry. Echo Lake personnel are very capable of monitoring a Home Lake Rule. Change the proposed rule to add a Home Rule requirement. Finally, the proposed rules give lip service to cleaning out ballasts. Wake Boats need to be banned from the lakes that they can be banned from (all except Champlain, Memphremagog, Wallace) until adequate wash stations are built. The Great Lakes have faired poorly since ballasts were allowed. Please do not make the same mistake with some of the most pristine lakes in the country.

I support the DEC's improved wakeboat rules, because i am concerned about shoreline erosion, invasive species, and swimmer and boater safety. I support increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres, and I support expanding safety buffers from 200 ft to 500 feet from other users or structures.

I strongly oppose allowing wake boats on Echo Lake in East Charleston. The shoreline provides critical breeding ground for loons. It is also important to preserve the peaceful character of the lake. Trading these for the enjoyment of a few recreational boaters does not make sense.

I clicked the wrong button in the vote below in my previous submission. Please disregard and register my vote shown here.

In general, I agree with the comments made by of the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds and with the comments submitted by the Seymour Lake Association. Many provisions in the proposed Use of Public Waters law are positive steps toward protecting Vermont's surface waters while allowing wake boats to be used. However, wake sports and wake boats do not meet the definition of normal use of public waters. I've observed that my home lake of Seymour Lake is just barely large enough for wake sports and other public water uses to coincide, mostly because of the neighborly behavior of users of Seymour Lake. Wake boat users and vulnerable swimmers, kayakers, paddle boaters and canoeists work to avoid harming each other. Wake boats cannot currently be properly decontaminated within our state. This threatens our AIS free lake. For these reasons, I do not believe wake boats should be allowed in public waters until the issues they can cause are resolved.

Because wake sports and the boats used for them do not fall within the definition of normal use, the proposed law approaches this issue backward. The law should instead establish a process requiring those who wish to use wake boats on Vermont's public waters to petition for that privilege and demonstrate that the waters in which they intend to operate will not be harmed. It should not be the responsibility of lake stewards to solve the problems these boats can cause to water quality, the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS), or other recreational uses. Manufacturers, dealers, and owners of wake boats are better positioned to prevent these harms.

My most urgent concern is that wake sports and wake boats currently cannot be prevented from spreading AIS. The state does not have enough costly decontamination stations to stop wake boats from transporting AIS between lakes. A single instance of a watercraft introducing an invasive species to an uninfected lake can cost the local community and the state hundreds of thousands of dollars over many years to control or remove it.

In the meantime, I urge you to implement the home lake rule. At Seymour Lake we have worked for 25 years to prevent the introduction of AIS. We have also reversed a steeply rising trend in phosphorus pollution. We maintain a collaborative relationship with wake boat owners and do not face all of the threats seen on smaller lakes. Both the Seymour Lake Association and FOVLAP have proposed plans to implement the home lake rule. Please work with us to make this happen. Lake communities are willing to help implement and fund the home lake rule in partnership with DEC. At Seymour Lake, we have worked alongside DEC for decades to protect our lake, as have stewards across Vermont. We respect the scientists with whom we have collaborated and trust that DEC will adopt some form of home lake rule in the final Use of Public Waters law.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment, the work you have done to create the propose law and hope you will carefully consider my suggestions.

Peggy Barter

I am writing as a lifelong Vermont lake lover who has spent decades enjoying our waters in simple, meaningful ways on paddleboards, in kayaks, swimming along the shoreline, and sharing quiet mornings watching the mist rise off the lake. The lakes are part of who I am. I value their beauty, their health, and the shared access that allows so many of us to experience them in different ways. Because I care so deeply about our lakes, I am writing to share some important insights regarding the ongoing debate about wake boats and their impact. I strongly encourage you to review the white paper authored by Dr. Banholzer, a professor of chemical engineering, who has thoroughly examined the issue of wake sports within the broader context of watercraft impacts. While Dr. Banholzer is based in Wisconsin, the research and studies he cites are directly relevant to Vermont and offer a broader, fact-based perspective on this often emotional and contentious topic.

His conclusions deserve careful consideration:

Wake Boats and Shore Erosion:

Singling out wake boats as a primary cause of shore erosion is not supported by decades of research. Studies spanning more than 40 years consistently identify natural forces — ice movement, runoff, fluctuating water levels, and general wind-driven wave action — as the dominant contributors to shoreline change.

According to the data summarized in the white paper, even at a distance of 200 feet, the wave energy produced by wake boats is comparable to that of other common watercraft, such as fishing boats or ski boats operating 100 feet from shore. Moreover, a sustained 20 mph wind across a lake can generate wave energy greater than that produced by most recreational boats.

As someone who paddles regularly, I have felt firsthand how wind-driven waves can reshape a shoreline far more dramatically than a passing boat operating at distance. If we are committed to science-based policy, regulations must reflect the full body of evidence rather than focusing narrowly on one category of boat

Safety and Regulation:

Wake boats are recognized as safe vessels by the United States Coast Guard. There are no documented accident trends or citation patterns indicating that wake boats pose a unique or disproportionate safety risk compared to other watercraft.

In contrast, safety incidents more commonly involve fishing boats, personal watercraft, and pontoon boats. This does not mean those vessels should be restricted it simply illustrates that wake boats, when operated responsibly and within established guidelines, do not represent a singular safety concern. . I oppose 500 ft from any object in wakezone. This will create confusion and conflict. Follow the US Coast guard rules of 250 Feet.

As someone who shares the water with all types of users I believe the focus should remain on responsible operation and enforceable behavior standards rather than vessel-specific restrictions unsupported by comparative data.

I cherish our lakes not only for recreation but for community, ecology, and tradition. We all want clean water, safe shorelines, and respectful coexistence. I respectfully ask that any regulatory decisions be grounded in comprehensive scientific review, proportional risk assessment, and equitable access for all lake users.

Our lakes are strongest when they remain places of shared stewardship NOT division.

The use of wake boats on lakes that have been home to swimmers and small craft is a disruptive invasion of a safe space where learning water skills and water safety thrives. Why permit a man-made hazard? Plenty of good surf and big water exist elsewhere.

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed increases in boating regulations on Vermont lakes. I grew up on lakes with my family, and although I am now in college, it remains an important part of my life. Watching these new rules develop has been both confusing and frustrating, particularly because I have not seen any new scientific data supporting the need for additional restrictions.

After taking time to research where these changes are coming from, I have not found any new evidence that would justify increasing the current regulations. Notably, there were no reported violations during the 2024 and 2025 boating seasons. This raises an important question: if there have been no documented issues, what new data supports tightening the rules?

Wake boats are recognized by the US Coast Guard as safe when operated responsibly, and there have been no reports of accidents or citations specifically tied to wake boats on our lake. In contrast, fishing boats, personal watercraft, and pontoon boats have been involved in numerous safety incidents nationwide. This underscores the fact that wake boats, when properly operated, do not pose a unique or heightened safety risk compared to other vessels.

Additionally, Vermont already has one of the most restrictive boating rules in the country. Before adding further limitations, it would seem reasonable to present clear, scientific data demonstrating a measurable problem that current regulations fail to address.

I ask that decision-makers oppose any more rules/ restrictions. Those of us who have grown up on lakes care deeply about its safety, environmental health, and responsible enjoyment for everyone.

Echo Lake is too small for wake boats and they would be dangerous to swimmers, boaters, children and the lake ecology.

Thank you

I am 86 and enjoy fishing quietly in my canoe. A wake boat followed by a skier nearly capsized me two summers ago on Harvey's Lake while I was trolling. It was a terrifying experience. Also, those wake boats with props buried so deep in the water churn up mud and ruin the fishing and fish breeding environment. Lastly, they come from "away" and may bring milfoil, etc., to our still pure lake. Ban them altogether, please!

I am a fourth generation owner of our home on Lake Willoughby. I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats, not just those engaged in watersports. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates.

The 100 acre calculation assumes a continuous 3,000 ft run multiplied by a fixed wake width, creating a static rectangular zone. In real world operation:

- Boats adjust paths
- Riders fall and restart
- Turns and speed changes occur
- Runs are rarely perfectly straight or continuous

Environmental exposure is driven by frequency of passes near sensitive areas, not theoretical maximum rectangle size. The Minnesota research does not model repeated exposure relative to total surface area, nor does it evaluate an acreage threshold. Thus, the 100 acre figure is a sport geometry abstraction, not an ecological impact metric.

The scientific studies cited in support of expanded buffers, including Marr et al. (University of Minnesota / SAFL, 2022), analyze how wake wave height, energy, and power attenuate with distance. These findings describe how far a wake must travel to diminish to a selected reference condition; they do not prescribe a regulatory requirement that a wakeboat must remain 500 feet from all objects while operating. Marr et al. state that wakesurf boats “required distances greater than 500 ft to attenuate wake wave characteristics...to levels equivalent to non wakesurf boats,” which is a comparative wave physics finding, not an operational mandate. The study does not define a 360 degree buffer, does not describe a “bubble” around the vessel, and does not recommend a rule structure requiring separation from every object within a wakesports zone.

Citation: Marr et al., Characterization of Boat Generated Wake Waves, University of Minnesota / SAFL (Feb 2022), Executive Summary
https://coalitionnavigation.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2025/09/BoatGeneratedWakeWaveReport_Feb12022_Final.pdf

Dear ANR / Lakes & Ponds Program,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments.

I oppose the proposed 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, the 500-foot “from any object” provision, the increase in minimum lake size from 50 to 100 acres, the classification of wakesports as “non-normal use,” and the revisions to Sections 3.7 and 4.3. These changes are not supported by demonstrated scientific necessity in the rulemaking record.

3,000-Foot Straight-Run

No peer-reviewed environmental or boating-safety research establishes 3,000 feet as a required minimum run length. The wake studies most often cited evaluate wave height, energy, and attenuation relative to shoreline distance and depth. They do not prescribe straight-line operating distances.

The 3,000-foot figure reflects a typical ride length and geometric modeling assumptions. It is operational, not hydrodynamic.

500 Feet From “Any Object”

Vermont’s boating safety framework is built around a 200-foot standard. Wake attenuation research addresses energy dissipation, not collision envelopes or universal separation from “any object.”

Research from the University of Minnesota and Marr et al., introduced through public comments requesting additional restrictions, examines wake characteristics. It does not establish a 500-foot buffer from all objects.

Requiring 500 feet from shore and other vessels creates a large exclusion zone that may make compliance impractical.

100-Acre Minimum

Lake acreage is not a hydrodynamic variable. Area thresholds are derived from assumed run length and setbacks — geometry, not measured environmental impact.

Vermont’s current rule already requires 50 acres plus shoreline and depth safeguards. No study in the record demonstrates that 50 acres is insufficient or that 100 acres is environmentally necessary.

Normal Use and Administrative Changes

Wakesurfing is an evolution of long-standing inboard towed watersports predating 1993. Technological refinement does not create a new legal use category.

The proposed revisions to Sections 3.7 and 4.3 expand administrative discretion without defined evidentiary standards or time limits, shifting from objective criteria to open-ended restriction.

Conclusion

I oppose these amendments because:

3,000 feet is not supported by peer-reviewed research.

500 feet from any object is not established by wake science.

100 acres is not a demonstrated environmental threshold.

Wakesurfing falls within Vermont's normal use framework.

The proposed administrative structure lacks clear scientific guardrails.

These provisions function as policy restrictions without Vermont-specific scientific evidence demonstrating necessity.

Thank you for considering this comment.

Russ Wilde

I support the proposed rule change. As a frequent kayaker on several Vermont lakes, I'm aware of how dangerous these enhanced wakes can be.

Petition by Waterbury to ban wakesports should be approved.

Friends of the Winooski River supports the proposed changes to the Use of Public Waters Rules.

I fully support the proposed amendments to Vermont's Use of Public Waters because: I have witnessed Wake boats causing erosion and the release of excess nutrients on shore lines and people abandoning their activities due to the arrival of wake boats. The waves produced by these vessels can be dangerous for swimmers and paddlers. Wildlife is affected by the shoreline disruption and large waves produced. These vessels are becoming a problem throughout the nation, not just in Vermont lakes and ponds. Waterbury Reservoir needs to have its water quality protected, as due all our bodies of water. We need to keep these amazing places safe for the vast majority of users who can enjoy these waters only when wake boats aren't there causing disruptions.

My family has been coming to Lake Willoughby for five generations now and we have two cottages on the west side of the lake. I am very concerned about the ecological impact of wake sports on our lake. It is well known that high-impact wakes erode shorelines and destroy loon nests and other animal homes. Also, I am extremely worried about the safety of my grandchildren as they learn to swim and boat on the lake. A tidal wave can easily overcome a child as well as an adult swimmer unless they are very strong swimmers.

I have been following the wake sport legislation closely and support the DEC's changes in response to earlier comments about boater and swimmer safety and shoreline erosion made by a large number of people including myself. The proposed improvements below are absolutely essential to protecting our shoreline and our children.

- Increase the minimum wake sports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- Expand safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I am also extremely concerned about DEC's plans to replace the Home Lake Rule with hot water decontamination of boats without having the necessary funding and time to build the required decontamination stations. Residual water in ballast tanks of wake boats can spread invasive species rapidly. Removing invasive species is a daunting task. I have seen the damage that the invasive species, milfoil, has done to Lake Willoughby. For decades now, many, many residents have spent countless weeks and months trying to control the invasion of milfoil. What is the plan for Lake Willoughby after more invasive species have been introduced?

I have been overcome by the wake of large motor boats on Lake Willoughby many times while I was either swimming and canoeing. I can only imagine what the waves coming from a wake boat would be like. Many times boat drivers have no idea how close they are coming to my canoe or a swimmer. They may not see a boat or swimmer and they may not know what 500 feet from shore looks like.

We are talking about the long term effects of wake boats on the ecological system of Lake Willoughby and the potential for human tragedy as a result of tidal waves. Let's not be short-sided about this decision and look out for our children and grandchildren and the environment that they will inherit.

As someone who has been a camper on the lake for the last 14 years, I do not want to see wake boats on the lake. The speed boats that are there now cause enough of a problem. Little campers learning to swim or having a first experience on the lake are scared because of the wakes that these boats generate. Wake boats would make it even more challenging. Campers new to paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing, swimming find it challenging now and this would only make it worse. I would like to see only pontoon boats allowed on the lake at low speeds if any boat at all

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes to the Use of Public Waters rule regarding wakesurfing and wake boat access. This proposal is an arbitrary overreach that lacks scientific backing, ignores the success of Vermont's current 2024 standards, and threatens to create more environmental and safety issues than it purports to solve. I urge the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to withdraw this proposal and maintain the current regulatory framework.

1. Lack of Evidence and "Zero Credible Violations"

The current wakesurfing standards, which were only implemented in 2024, are working. Since their inception, there have been zero credible violations reported under the existing framework. Regulation should be a response to a documented failure of current law; however, the data shows that Vermont's boaters are compliant and the current rules are sufficient. To introduce more restrictive measures now is not only premature but suggests a regulatory solution in search of a non-existent problem.

2. Arbitrary Standards vs. Real-World Science

The proposed 3,000-foot lake-length requirement is fundamentally disconnected from the reality of Vermont's waterways.

Arbitrary Metrics: There is no peer-reviewed, site-specific scientific data suggesting that a 3,000-foot length is a magical threshold for environmental safety.

Ignoring Key Factors: By focusing on lake length, the ANR is ignoring the more meaningful and enforceable metrics that actually impact lake health, such as:

Distance from shore.

Specific operator behavior and speed.

Localized boat traffic patterns and depth.

3. Impact on Access and the "Congestion Paradox"

If adopted, this proposal would reduce the number of eligible lakes for wakesurfing in Vermont from 30 down to just 18.

Unfair Targeting: Wake boats account for less than one percent of registered boats statewide. Displacing this tiny fraction of the boating community does not provide a meaningful environmental gain, but it does create a massive social and safety burden.

Increased Congestion: By forcing the same number of boaters into 40% fewer bodies of water, the state will inadvertently create "hotspots" of high-density traffic. This increased congestion on the remaining 18 lakes will lead to higher safety risks and more concentrated environmental pressure than the current distributed model.

4. Education Over Overregulation

The NMMA and the boating community at large advocate for education as the primary tool for lake stewardship.

Behavior-Based Solutions: Most conflicts on the water are the result of a lack of awareness regarding distance and etiquette. These are solved through signage, boater education programs, and

enforcement of existing laws—not by banning a specific hull type from public waters.

The Path Forward: Overregulation creates a culture of resentment and confusion. Education creates a culture of conservation.

Conclusion

The proposed changes to the Use of Public Waters rule are unnecessary, unscientific, and discriminatory toward a small segment of the boating public. Rather than solving existing issues, this rule will create new problems by concentrating traffic and limiting the rights of Vermonters to enjoy their public resources.

I stand with the NMMA in calling for the immediate withdrawal of this proposal. The Agency should allow more time for the 2024 standards to be fully evaluated before considering further restrictions that lack a basis in documented violations or sound science.

I am a fourth generation resident of Morgan, Seymour Lake. I am one of the largest landowners on the lake. The lakes health and cleanliness are of utmost importance to me. I am also an avid wake boarder. It is essential that we preserve the Home Lake Rule. Currently there are 7 wake boats on Seymour, all residents. We as a group have worked very hard to promote good relations with other Lake users and follow current rules to our best ability. We have excellent relations with our Lake Greeters and work closely with them to help enforce current rules. They have assured us they can handle the enforcement of the Home Lake Rule and ballast cleaning for visiting boats. Please do not take this last rule away from our pristine lakes, it is our only hope to prevent invasive species from coming to our lakes. Seymour Lake will suffer the infusion of more wake boats because we are the largest body of water within the State. Allow us to police our own investment and future well being of Seymour Lake.

I also support the following:

1. Removal of the 14-day quarantine loophole that is not scientifically supported (studies indicate that only a hot water wash is sufficient for wake boat ballasts)
2. Allowing greeters to inform watercraft of the regulations and if someone is in violation, without threat of losing grant funding or the ability to operate on the fishing access (the current language is very severe and could be interpreted as greeters not even being allowed to dissuade a watercraft coming from an impaired water body)
3. Proof of decontamination
4. Development of a scientifically-based decontamination protocol that will be protective of our pristine water bodies.

I work at Ohana Family Camp on Lake Fairlee. The use of wake boats poses a safety issue for our campers enjoying swimming and boating at the waterfront. We have campers from age 0-99. I have witnessed many campers feeling unsafe in the water as wake boats pass us. Adults and children's experiences are interrupted by the effect of wake boats and make them feel uneasy in a place that is meant to provide connection with nature, disconnection with technology, ease and serenity. I uphold the reconditions without compromise.

Twelve years ago, my husband and I had the good fortune to be on the hunt for a vacation home. We were instantly drawn to Lake Fairlee for its pristine water, quiet setting and its smattering of summer camps. We purchased three lovely, lakefront acres where we built a home and renovated a former camp cabin already on the property, and in 2016 we purchased an adjacent tree-filled three-acre lot which remains undeveloped. We created what felt like a dream spot for our family and friends to gather in, on and around Lake Fairlee. Since then, the lake has been where we swim and play, where my daughter learned to row, where we have relaxed by sailing, kayaking and paddle boarding, where we have enjoyed our Bayliner for tubing and waterskiing and leisurely sunset loops around the lake where we encounter loons and our fellow neighbors. During this time, My husband and I have been good stewards of the lake and the surrounding community by our highly considerate use of the lake and our property, our support to the Lake Fairlee Association, and by the preservation and planting of trees and shrubs to reduce run-off into the lake.

Over the last several years, we have become deeply disturbed by how the presence of just a couple of wakeboarding boats (by this I mean boats engaged in wakesports) has begun to change the character of the lake to the detriment of the majority of lake goers, and has raised a myriad of serious environmental concerns, including the impact of pollutants and invasives boats might bring into the lake, stirring up millfoil and the erosion of the lake shoreline.

Safety, however, is of the greatest concern to our family.

It is far too easy for a single boat on Lake Fairlee to cause personal injury (my own experience is described below), and scare other users (the majority of which do not engage in wakesports) off of the lake and sometimes away from their shoreline. The suggested "compromises" of allowing wakesports at certain hours or places on Lake Fairlee would require countless people, including the hundreds of campers who use the lake each summer, to limit their use of the lake when their use of the lake interferes with no one. After 12 years as a lakefront homeowner, I can confidently say, I will paddle board around motor boats, swim next to kayaks and sail with everyone. I will not be able to enjoy Lake Fairlee with wakeboarding boats barreling around.

A few years ago, my husband and then 11 year-old daughter were out paddle boarding and swimming in front our home. As I attempted to launch my kayak from the same spot on our shoreline that I had launched it from for the eight years prior, I slipped slightly as the waves from the wakeboarding boat hit the shore. The waves blocked the view of my feet and caused me to further lose my balance. I fell, and I injured my foot. Badly. The boat was well on its way to the other end of the lake as the waves were still hitting the shoreline and bouncing around the swim docks. My daughter who was practicing her swimming strokes had to stop and bob around every few minutes while and well after the boat passed. With my foot throbbing and heart racing, instead of being outside enjoying the Sunday afternoon with my husband and daughter, I went inside to ice my foot. For days, I hobbled around, uncomfortable, with eggplants for toes. Since then, I have not been able to trust that my family will be safe as long as wakesports are permitted on Lake Fairlee. Lake Fairlee is not Lake Champlain. It just isn't. No amount of compromise can change that.

I support the proposed rule changes, although I would like to see the Home Lake Rule included, so that Lake Fairlee can be used in a safe way that benefits a majority of community members and best preserves the health of our small, beautiful lake.

As the President, greeter's coordinate and Crystal Lake preservation association members representative. We are for the proposed changes but think it doesn't go far enough.

Many of our members are extremely concern for their safety and what the repercussions will be for the water quality, wildlife and ecosystems. This was discussed two years in the row at our annual CLPA meeting. I urge all to take this very seriously. Vermont's tourism relies on the beauty of our Lakes and Mountains. This is a huge part of the state's economy, and I am worried that allowing wakesports on our lakes will result in less tourism and our local residents to enjoy other water sports safely. Many volunteers from all different lakes have put a lot of time and efforts in sharing this sentiment, I certainly hope it will not be in vain.

I'm writing to clearly and respectfully oppose the proposed changes to wakesport regulations. After following this issue closely for over a year and repeatedly asking to see the science behind these amendments, I still have not seen evidence that justifies the scope of what's being proposed.

I ask that you maintain the current regulations for the following reasons:

First, the proposed 500-foot "any object" buffer is not supported by the research being cited. Wake studies focus on shoreline wave attenuation — not 360-degree moving exclusion zones around any object on the water. Vermont already operates under a 200-foot safety framework. Expanding that to a 500-foot moving buffer makes lawful operation nearly impossible in practice and stretches the research beyond its intended context, which was limited to shorelines, docks, and other boats.

It also creates a real safety concern. Most boaters cannot accurately judge the difference between 200 and 500 feet on open water. Even Vermont game wardens have acknowledged that expecting the public to track those differences reliably is unrealistic.

Second, the 100-acre minimum lake size is arbitrary. Acreage is a mathematical measurement, not an environmental response indicator. Wake energy does not suddenly change because a lake crosses an acreage threshold. This feels less like science and more like a policy mechanism designed to eliminate lakes by definition. Reducing available lakes will simply increase congestion and density on the remaining ones. The 2024 decision already significantly limited access — further compression is not a sustainable solution.

Third, Sections 3.7 and 4.3 introduce troubling procedural risks. The framework would allow the Secretary to add or remove lakes based on "lake conditions," "scientific research," or "other good cause" outside the formal rulemaking process. That creates a pathway where approved lakes could be restricted indefinitely without defined criteria, transparent study parameters, or clear timelines for reinstatement. That lack of guardrails undermines trust in the process.

Fourth, there is no scientific evidence establishing 3,000 feet as an environmental necessity. This number appears to reflect ride patterns and geometry, not hydrodynamic or shoreline impact research.

Fifth, labeling wakesports as "non-normal use" is inaccurate. Towed watersports using inboard boats predate 1993. The evolution of boat technology does not make the activity itself new. Wakesurfing is simply a modern development of long-standing recreational boating practices.

Finally, implementation and process matter. Before adding new restrictions, the State should ensure that existing rules are fully integrated into boater education and enforcement training. The current public comment structure also raises concerns. The required selection option for those who feel the rules "do not go far enough" — without a corresponding "go too far" option — does not reflect balanced framing. That structure undermines confidence in the neutrality of the process.

When rulemaking moves away from clearly grounded science and toward standards shaped primarily by advocacy pressure, public trust erodes. I believe strongly that we must base environmental policy on transparent data, practical enforceability, and fair process.

For these reasons, I urge you to reject the proposed changes and maintain the current regulations.

I have enjoyed my visits to Lake Fairlee since my daughter built a vacation home ten years ago. At eighty-one I especially enjoy the calm, generally quiet atmosphere along the lake. I also like watching people of all ages enjoying a host of activities (kayaking, canoeing, tubing, fishing, etc). I am opposed to wakesports that would disrupt these activities and detract from what makes Lake Fairlee so special. I support the proposed changes and I do not think they go far enough.

I have lived on Echo Lake for 77 years and am very concerned about maintaining the water quality of the lake and maintaining safety for swimming and boating. Echo Lake is a small lake and wake sports are not appropriate on the lake. I am requesting that wake boats not be allowed on the lake and that this be clearly identified in the Public Waters Rules.

Echo Lake in Charleston is very important to me. We own shoreline on the lake and do not want it damaged by wake sports. We and our children and grandchildren boat and swim in the lake. Echo Lake is a small lake and it would be dangerous for swimming and boating if there were wake boats. They should not be allowed on this lake.

I support the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules concerning wake boats as an unsatisfactory pragmatic compromise. The wake boat lobby is the special interest in this rule-making exercise, not the environmental groups and lake associations. There are strong environmental reasons to protect the public's lakes from wake boats. Degrading lakes for the amusement of the few is bad policy.

As a tourist destination Vermont's brand has been bucolic. Tourists flock to rural Vermont to get away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Trying to manage a lake as a multi-use area that can accommodate the general public's uses, like swimming, canoeing, sailing, and fishing, with exclusive, intrusive, specialty water sports like wake boating is a losing proposition. Traditional public users will be driven out by ever larger and more powerful wakeboats, while the ecological health of the lake deteriorates. This is not why most people choose to visit Vermont.

I support the rule changes as a best we can get compromise to the best alternative which is keeping Vermont's lakes free of wake boats.

I live at the north end of Crystal Lake, and I am also the Treasurer for the Crystal Lake Preservation Association. We have worked so very hard to ensure the spread of invasive species is kept under control on our lake, and we have done a great job for many years. I am extremely concerned that allowing wakeboats on our little lake (compared to most!) will increase the spread of milfoil, not only to our lake here but it can spread from Crystal to other lakes hidden in the wakeboats. We have greeters who inspect the boats at the boat launch for any plant material, however, we cannot inspect inside the ballasts, etc. of the wakeboats. We also have many loons and native birds in the summer and also have small children at Pageant Park that would be very disrupted with wakesporters who do not understand the laws or blatantly disregard them (such as those who throw their trash in the lake!). The people who love wakesports have plenty of much larger lakes they can practice their recreation on, I would strongly suggest banning wakesports completely on smaller lakes such as Crystal Lake.

Watersports should be extremely limited for these reasons

Public Safety: Massive wake waves can suddenly overwhelm swimmers, children, and other boaters.

Infrastructure Gaps: The DEC plans to replace the "Home Lake Rule" with hot water decontamination but lacks the necessary funding and timeline to build the required decon stations.

Environmental Damage: High-impact wakes erode shorelines and destroy loon nests. Residual water in ballast tanks can spread invasive species.

Limited Visibility: Heavy aft ballast weight lifts the boat's bow, significantly impairing the driver's view of others on the water.

I am a resident of Thetford, VT and a member of the Lake Fairlee Association. I am also a lake swimmer, kayaker, and paddleboarder. I support the DEC's proposed limits on wake sports but feel that they do not go far enough to protect small lakes and the personal safety of their traditional users.

Lake Fairlee is a small lake with five active summer camps and a public boat launch much beloved by local users. All the summer camps, local bordering towns and their conservation committees, many local businesses, and huge numbers of local residents and property owners signed petitions supporting a ban on wakesports on our small lake. Why? They are dangerous to all other lake users and destructive to our shallow lake's ecology. A single wake boat operating in wake mode effectively prohibits safe use by any other user or swimmer in the narrow wake sport zone. That wake sports zone borders four of the five summer camps, creating unsafe conditions for young campers.

A recent "Sidenote" article notes discussion at a DEC hearing about setting aside a special time for these destructive boats: this idea is offensive and ludicrous. First, there should be no compromise of safety to accommodate special interests such as the wakesports industry. Second, a single wakeboat in wakesport mode creates unsafe conditions and prevents lake use and enjoyment by any other user in the wake zone: One wake boat thus rules the entire lake and leaves all other users in fear for their safety. This cannot be what the rule makers intended for our small lakes.

I support the currently drafted proposed rule changes without compromise, and would like more protection for the safety of lake users.

No wakesports on Harvey Lake

My comment:

Wake sports require a minimum of 100-acre WSZ & 3,000-ft run. It is well known at this point that large wake boat waves can unexpectedly overwhelm boaters, paddlers, swimmers, etc. I support VT DEC's proposal, but urge you provide further protection by adopting RWVL's rule changes. Thank you.

For concerns regarding invasive species, safety, and shoreline conservation I believe the language proposed regarding wakeboats is not adequate. Especially given ongoing and serious health concerns about Cyanobacteria.

Please do not allow wake boats and wake sport activities free reign on our lakes as it is harmful to the wildlife, increases invasive species, and is potentially harmful to swimmers. Our family has been stewards of Echo Lake for generations. We are actively protecting the shoreline by ensuring our waterfront is natural. We do not use chemicals on our property that could contaminate the lake. Our son Oliver, spent one summer volunteering to inspect water craft for invasive species at the outlet. He spent another summer working with the Northwoods Conservation Crew on projects to protect lakeshores in the Northeast Kingdom. We know that excessive turbidity from wake boats and wake craft will increase the phosphorus levels in the lake and undo the hours of volunteer work we have put in. Our home at 1836 W. Echo Lake Rd. is a certified Lake Wise waterfront. We want the loons to continue to grace the lake with their presence.

I want to share with you an experience I had when swimming in the lake. I like to put on my blue swim cap and swim parallel to the shore for 15-20 minutes. Then, I swim back along the shoreline. Depending on the seaweed, I may need to swim out a bit deeper. Once, a fast boat zoomed past, swamping me and leaving a gas odor and taste. I don't think they even saw me swimming. I know I could swim with a yellow bubble, but it doesn't seem right that I need to change my quiet ways of communing with nature to warn others (who clearly do not care about our lake's health) are being safe. If I was disturbed by this boat, I can only imagine how the fish, loons, and other wildlife feel. We are all interconnected and need to protect our lake. Please Increase the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run).

Echo Lake should be exempted from wakeboats for several reasons:

1. Echo Lake is one of only two oligotrophic lakes in Vermont, which means it is crystal clear and supports cold water fish species
2. Echo Lake is a very small lake located within a mile of a huge lake (Seymour Lake) much more suitable for wakeboating (bingo - problem solved)
3. Echo Lake is relatively shallow (less than 20' deep) on the north and south shores for several hundred feet, further reducing the environmentally safe operating zone for wakeboating
4. Echo Lake hosts a significant number of kayakers and trolling fishermen in small watercraft on a regular basis, who would experience a significant increase in personal safety risk
5. Echo Lake hosts one or two loon families every summer. The waves generated by wakeboats would easily swamp these loon nests with their hatchlings
6. Echo Lake would face the increased risk of shoreline erosion

This is all common sense, for the common, and greater good. Thank you

I am writing in response to proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Water Rules, as filed in December 2025, pertaining to wakeboats.

I fully support the changes to the designated wakesport zone. The larger acreage requirement and the offset of 500 feet from shorelines will provide a better safety buffer for other lake users. Non-motorized vessels, swimmers, and others should have a space where faster, bulkier wakeboats are not permitted. These very different uses of a waterbody are not compatible in the same space. Loons will also appreciate the additional buffer space during nesting season.

As I noted in comments provided during the development of the original wakesport rules, Vermont's lakes are worthy of strong protection to maintain their water quality, their wildlife, and their recreational opportunities. While wakeboats may make up a small proportion of the vessels on Vermont's waters, they cause significant effects because of their large size and their water displacement. The best place for wakeboats are on our largest lakes – Champlain and Memphremagog - where there is much more open water to reduce the chances of conflict with other users and maritime law enforcement is already in place to oversee activity.

I'm concerned about boats that move between lakes without adequate safeguards. To better protect our waters, I believe we should consider mandatory, staffed wash stations at boat launches. The experience at Joes Pond shows how difficult and costly it is to manage milfoil once it's introduced — prevention is far more effective than trying to fix the problem later.

Wake boats also deserve careful review, particularly regarding ballast water transfer and shoreline erosion. Our lakes are shared resources, and protecting water quality and shoreline health benefits everyone.

Vermont has a strong tradition of environmental stewardship. I hope we can continue that legacy by working together on practical solutions that preserve our lakes for future generations.

Please revise the proposed wakesports rule changes. The 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer would significantly restrict access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. AIS prevention should be addressed through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make targeted, evidence-based changes.

My parents first came to the lake in 1970 and have recently passed on their cabin to my siblings and I. While I live in VA, I make it up to the cabin for summer and fall visits each year. Over the past 55 years, we have made some tremendous memories at the lake. I have noticed tremendous erosion over the years to our shoreline and fully support the DEC's proposed rule changes to prohibit wakesports on Lake Fairlee. I have been swimming in the lake many times when some of these boats came uncomfortably close and did not slow down (I am thinking because their attention is not always looking ahead but looking behind as well. The waves caused by their hull structure create quite a disturbance to anyone swimming or in canoes or kayaks.

Hello — I oppose these changes. Wakesurfing and use of wake boats has been a HUGE part of family togetherness for us!!! I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. I strongly urge you to keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates. I care because in order to protect the lakes, evidence based approaches should be the route taken, and this proposal will not result in the lakes protection as a priority outcome.

Please:

Increase the minimum wakesports zone (WSZ) from 50 to 100 acres and require a minimum 3,000-foot run. This will remove 12 or 13 small lakes from the wakesports eligible list.

Expand the safety buffer from other users and in water structures from 200 to 500 feet.

The proposed elimination of the Home Lake Rule and replacing it with hot water boat decontamination — without a needed timeline & funding source to develop the necessary infrastructure.

Large wake boat waves can unexpectedly overwhelm boaters, swimmers, kids, and others.

Wake boater's vision is significantly impaired by the lifting of the bow due to heavy ballast.

Wake boats threaten loon nests, can transport invasive species, and erode shorelines.

I oppose the elimination of Homelake Rule.

Quarantine options should be removed because there is no way to prove this.

It does not appear as if the decontamination locations, process or proof of decontamination are going to be ready anytime soon and we need protection until that occurs.

There should not be threats to the operation of greeter programs in this rule. The greeter programs have done the hard work of protecting our lake for 25 years with little help from the state.

I am a Vermont resident who has lived in Thetford for over 30 years. Lake Fairlee is one of the gems of this town and it is a recreational focal point year-round. In addition, there are several seasonal youth and family camps that have been operating here for many years. While I do not live directly on the lake it is only 5 mile from my house and I kayak and swim there regularly. I also use the lake in the winter.

I am not in favor wake boats on the Lake Fairlee primarily for safety reasons as I have had to navigate large waves while kayaking. Had I not been paying attention and adjusted my position I could have easily capsized. I also fear for campers sailing, paddleboarding and swimming as these waves are much larger than from normal boats. In addition to safety I am concerned about the ecology of the lake from several standpoints and the unnatural effects that wake boats have on the lake's ecosystem. Please implement the rule as written. Even one wake boat at a time is too much for Lake Fairlee.

Respectfully Submitted
Jeffrey Smith

I am in support of the new rules and banning wake boats from Harvey's as the area for use does not fit
I am against these changes.

As somebody that has operated power boats in both salt and fresh water I believe the proposed rules are not in compliance with good seamanship. As everybody should know, the operator of a power vessel is responsible for it's wake. The wake is not only on the surface but also subsurface. In vt, ponds and lakes are relatively shallow so the effect of wake boats is not only surface but subsurface. Specifically Holland Pond has a maximum depth of about 35 feet wake boats traveling at this depth probably would not cause a problem but without lanes these boats would probably be disturbing the bottom enough to cause problems. Unfortunately because most vt ponds are man made the bottoms are mud which when disturbed causes problems for both wildlife life and man. Wakeboats are not in good seamanship and in addition would probably cause damage to wildlife, shoreline and any non-power vessels. thanks you for this opportunity to express my opinion

I am submitting this comment to express my serious concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the wakesport rules. As a resident who follows lake management issues closely, it is clear to me that the State is moving toward additional restrictions before it has fulfilled its responsibility to properly implement the current ones.

Before adding another layer of complex regulation, the State must ensure that the existing 2024 rules are fully integrated into official Vermont boater education materials, reflected in updated public signage, and consistently incorporated into enforcement training. At present, there is a noticeable gap in regulatory implementation. Expanding buffers, doubling acreage thresholds, and introducing new operational standards will have little practical effect if the boating public does not have clear tools, accurate maps, and standardized instruction explaining the current requirements. Regulatory expansion without a foundation of proper education undermines compliance, fairness, and public trust.

The proposed 100-acre lake threshold and the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement appear to be arbitrary figures rather than science-based environmental standards. No clear data has been presented to explain why 100 acres is an ecological necessity when the 50-acre standard was only recently reviewed and adopted. If the previous threshold was considered environmentally protective in 2024, what new field data justifies doubling it now? Policy changes of this magnitude should be supported by transparent, Vermont-specific evidence.

The 500-foot buffer from any object is also a major practical concern. Many boaters already struggle to accurately judge 250 feet on open water. Expanding that distance to 500 feet—nearly the length of two football fields—without a substantial, state-led education and outreach campaign will likely result in widespread accidental violations. Moving regulatory goalposts without first ensuring public understanding will increase confusion and conflict rather than improve environmental outcomes. Clear implementation must come before expansion.

I also strongly oppose the proposal to classify wakesports as a non-normal use. Towed watersports behind inboard motorboats have been a staple of Vermont lake recreation since well before 1993. The evolution of boat design and ballast systems does not transform a longstanding activity into something legally “new.” Redefining an established recreational practice because equipment has improved is an inconsistent application of the law and sets a concerning precedent. If modernization alone justifies reclassification, nearly any contemporary boat could eventually be restricted under the same logic.

Finally, I request that any administrative suspension of a lake’s eligibility for research, study, or management purposes be strictly limited. Such suspensions must be based on documented necessity, limited to one boating season, and require formal rulemaking to extend beyond that timeframe. Without clear guardrails, administrative discretion could effectively be used to remove public access indefinitely, without the transparency and accountability of a public rulemaking process.

Vermont Boater Education presents a clear regulatory implementation and accountability concern. Before adding additional restrictions, the State must ensure that existing rules are fully implemented, clearly communicated, and incorporated into official boater education programs and enforcement training protocols. Regulatory expansion without proper education undermines compliance, fairness, and public trust.

The State should focus on education, outreach, and consistent enforcement of the carefully developed 2024 standards before layering on new and unsupported restrictions. I respectfully urge you to maintain the current rules as they are and prioritize effective implementation over expansion.

Thank you.

My husband and I are full time, year round property owners and residents of Post Mills on the west side of Lake Fairlee. Keith moved here in 1980. Our two main water sports are kayaking and swimming. We are in our 70's and 80's. We love living near the lake and have long-term interest in keeping the lake ecosystems and wildlife protected for generations to come.

My mother-in-law was a camper at Aloha Hive when she was a young girl back in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Keith's cousin attended Camp Billings one summer in the 1980's and Keith's sister and brother-in-law have been vacationing on Lake Fairlee for four decades. They are kayakers and swimmers.

We are very concerned about safety on Lake Fairlee. We are concerned about large waves capsizing us, our neighbors or summer camp children. Wakeboats create dangerous conditions for the hundreds of children camping at the six summer camps every summer offering swimming, sailing, canoeing, or kayaking.

ANR/DEC acknowledges it did not consider public safety when drafting the existing wakesports rule. A minimum 100-acre WSZ will fix this safety omission by prohibiting wakesports on Lake Fairlee, thus protecting campers, all lake users, the lake's, and limit the spread of aquatic invasive species. This is a critical safety fix that would also provide ecosystem benefits.

Please implement the DEC proposed Rule change as written, with no exceptions for "one wake boat at a time" on Lake Fairlee. It should be strengthened by adopting the RWVL rule changes.

Thank you,
Sherry Merrick
Post Mills

February 18, 2026

To: ANR.WSMDLakes@vermont.gov

From: Hinesburg Conservation Commission

Re: Support for Proposed Use of Public Waters Rule Changes and Recommended Improvements

The Hinesburg Conservation Commission supports the proposed updates to Vermont's Use of Public Waters rules because they reflect what our community values most: healthy lakes, safe recreation, and the protection of natural shorelines and wildlife. Wake enhancing boats generate large, powerful waves that accelerate shoreline erosion, disturb bottom sediments, and create unsafe conditions for paddlers, anglers, swimmers, and families who rely on these waters for traditional, low impact recreation.

We support prohibiting wake boat use on smaller and more vulnerable waterbodies, including Lake Iroquois, and endorse the proposed 100 acre minimum zone for wakesports. These measures help ensure that traditional users can continue to enjoy the water safely while protecting the ecological integrity of our lakes.

To further strengthen the rule and better serve our community, we recommend:

1. Retaining the Home Lake rule.

Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species is essential for protecting natural shorelines, water quality, and the recreational experience of local residents. Allowing boats to move between lakes without proof of decontamination undermines community investments in greeter programs and lake protection.

2. Increasing the minimum water depth to 30 feet.

A 30 foot minimum depth reduces bottom scour and prevents the release of legacy phosphorus. Clear, clean water is central to both ecological health and the enjoyment and safety of traditional users.

3. Expanding the setback to 700 feet.

A larger buffer is critical for protecting natural shorelines, reducing erosion, and safeguarding sensitive wildlife habitat. Species such as loons—already vulnerable to disturbance—depend on quiet, stable nesting areas. A 700 foot setback helps ensure that powerful wakes dissipate before reaching these fragile zones and reduces conflicts between wakesports and traditional recreation.

4. Adding two clarifying statements.

- Wakesports are not a normal use. This distinction is important so that traditional users—who make up the majority of lake visitors—can continue to enjoy safe, predictable conditions.
- Include the precautionary principle. When community resources, wildlife habitat, and public safety are at risk, protective measures should be taken even when all scientific details are not yet fully established.

We appreciate the improvements in the proposed rule and encourage the Agency to strengthen it further to protect our community's lakes, natural shorelines, and rare species, while ensuring that traditional users can continue to enjoy these waters for generations.

Hinesburg Conservation Commission

Please adopt these proposed changes - it is the right thing to do for our lakes, the Vermonters who recreate in them, and the aquatic species who live there. Thank you!

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted. I'm also concerned about AIS being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. AIS prevention is important, but the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you

Please revise the proposed wakesports rule changes. The 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer would significantly restrict access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. AIS prevention should be addressed through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make targeted, evidence-based changes.

The only lake large enough for wake boats is Champlain - every other lake in Vermont should ban wake boats immediately.

In Vermont, when the rules and regulations are broken, there simply isn't enough enforcement which is why they should be banned all together. People in Vermont like to enjoy the beauty of the state and not destroy what has been preserved for decades.

Dear Ms. Dlugolecki,

I am writing to you as a citizen on Lake Morey of Fairlee, Vermont and as a dedicated environmentalist to OPPOSE the proposed language within the Vermont Use of Public Waters Rules, Section 3.7 Wakesports on the basis of the unacceptable ambiguity of the language which allows for flexibility of ruling that does not clearly protect the lakes and ponds of Vermont from egregious environmental and personal harm to people, species, riparian zones, water quality and property values. Lake Morey had a very successful and expensive alum treatment in 2024, to suppress the dangerous Cyanobacteria that had caused illness, death and decline in property values. Prior to the alum treatment, the lake was unusable and dangerously toxic. The water is now clean, thanks to the \$1 million treatment paid for by the state. It is back to being a lake that attracts residents, campers, visitors, recreational users and breeding loons. It is a Vermont gem. The biggest threat to this idyllic lake is the wake boats and the effect they have on the health and safety of Lake Morey. In 2025, it was evident that several wake boat drivers were not following the defined requirements in terms of distance from shore or depth of water to avoid accidents and harm. We need to follow the scientifically proven model of how to keep the lake as it is for all those mentioned above and this can only happen if the state proposes strict guidelines of 1000 ft from shore, more than 20 ft in depth, oversight at the boat ramp for algae on visiting craft and ideally, to ban wake boats in totality. This will become a growing problem for the lakes and definitely for the State unless rules are put in place and enforced.

I am including the well presented chart from the Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes which brings clarity to the threats of wake boats to our lake and others. Again, I want to OPPOSE the proposed language and hope that you and other key people in the government recognize how important the public waters are to the health and well being of the citizens, the attraction to visitors and the environmental sustainability of our waters and the land that surrounds them. This is the chance to get it right before the problem grows out of control.

Respectfully,

Deborah W. Leach

Woodward Leach Design
Acorn
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Fairlee, VT 05045 U.S.A.
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deborahwleach@comcast.net
longhaul@icloud.com
image001.jpg

Wake Boats On Harvey's Lake

My wife and I have happily donated well over \$20,000 to help the Harvey's Lake Association to both, keep out milfoil and protect the nesting loon population. We are now even seeing nesting bald eagles! Harvey's calm protected waters make this small (133 acre) lake very attractive to many day boaters, kayakers and SUP stand up paddle boarders.

Unfortunately, the recent influx of wake boats is causing real damage to the lake's shoreline and greatly disrupting established loon nesting sites. We've had to spend over \$30,000 building up stone along our frontage to stop the erosion due to the onslaught of big waves generated from these new boats.

They are also making it dangerous for folks to use stand up paddle boards. Kayaking is even becoming quite difficult, especially in ones smaller than 10 feet long.

We've been on the lake for 20+ years now and for the first time ever, we don't feel safe leaving our boat tied to the dock, so we've had to trailer it all summer long. Another very real concern is that their ballast tanks are going to contaminate the lake with milfoil.

Most important though, is that our small waterfront with its tiny beach is no longer a safe place for our grandchildren to play. So, for the first time ever, we are considering moving out before someone gets hurt. This is truly a sad situation, but it's unfortunately the new reality, unless Vermont bans wake boats from all lakes under 400 acres.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Tim van Leer

Lake Fairlee is a small lake and wakeboats are detrimental to the ecosystem as well as a nuisance to fishing and other recreational sports. We've just recently had loons come back to the lake and they're constantly having to duck and hide from the wakeboats.

I'm a retired Professional Engineer with over 40 years experience in the water/wastewater field, primarily practicing in Ohio and Florida. I currently own a camp on the eastern shore of Harvey's Lake.

The State of Vermont conducted a study entitled "Harvey's Lake Diagnostic-Feasibility Study 1980-1983 Final Report" that discusses the alga *Oscillatoria rubescens* (a blue-green algae) in Lake Harvey and states that it was found at a depth of 10 meters. The report indicates that this algae holds phosphorus. In a conversation with the State's limnologist and permitting staff, it was stated that the State does not have data/evidence to either support or defeat this concern and further stated that the lack of data is not data itself.

Data that was provided by the State regarding the scouring of sediments in support of the 20' minimum depth in the Wake Sports rule, actually showed that the impact of a wake boat's propeller is felt at a depth of 10 meters (33 feet). The rule does not address the algae situation in Harvey's.

It is unknown whether this algae is still present in Lake Harvey, whether it extends across the entire lake, or whether the phosphorus it holds is released when disturbed by wake boats, and thereby negatively impact water quality.

Until testing is conducted to determine the presence of this algae, its depth in the water column, the concentration of phosphorus it contains, and whether wake boats cause it to be re-suspended, consideration should be given to prohibiting wake sports on Lake Harvey. Similar consideration should be made for all other inland lakes.

In addition, the approval by the State to disallow wake sports on any other lake currently allowing wake sports will potentially increase the number of wake boats on Lake Harvey.

I agree with proposed improved wakesports rules on the additional 13 Vermont lakes and prioritize safety and lake health over industry interests. The rules need to add that no wake surfing is allowed on these lakes even with a rope. Surfers are skirting the rules by using a rope behind the boat which I have witnessed on Lake Groton where the sport is prohibited.

I am Jim Lengel, camp owner on Lake Elmore, resident of Duxbury, Vermont, and Coast Guard licensed charter boat captain.

Why 100 acres?

This proposed increase in the minimum area of a wakesports zone responds to safety concerns such as hazards to other users of the lake, and the cumulative effects of multiple wakeboats operating simultaneously.

It is based on the operational needs of wake surfing, which require enough straight-line distance to provide an enjoyable surfing session, as well as distance on both sides of the surfer to allow for effective dissipation of the wake, and the room necessary for the wakeboat to turn and maneuver at the end of the run.

Length

A wakesports zone needs to be at least 3,000 feet in length in order to accommodate typical wake surfing sessions. Wakesurfers normally travel in a straight line at 10-12 mph. A 3,000-foot run length allows for about a three- minute straight run, which mimics typical surfing behavior. This consideration was not explicitly included into the original state-wide rule.

It takes at least 3000' of distance for a wake surf boat to accelerate, raise and tune its wave, as the surfer stands up; then more distance for the surfer to stabilize on the wave before dropping the rope; then some distance for the actual surfing for perhaps one minute; followed by more distance as the surfer leaves the wave, the boat decelerates, and returns to pick up the surfer. Instructional material from wake boat manufacturers and enthusiasts describes this process in detail, forming the basis of the animated illustration of a typical wake surfing run on the RWVL web site. See A Wake Surfing Session

Width

A wakesports zone needs to be at least 1400 feet wide, in water at least 30 feet deep, to allow for dissipation of the surf waves before they reach the shoreline, docks, moored boats, swimmers, anglers, or other users of the lake. The 1400-foot width is based on the 600-foot-per side recommendations of DEC staff, averaged with the 900-foot-per-side recommendations of the most relevant research studies. A 3000-foot rectangle 1400 feet wide amounts to just under 100 acres.

I support the expansion of acreage from 50 acres to 100 acres. Such an area ensures safe yet enjoyable wake surfing sessions.

For animated explanations of this, see

A Day on the Lake at <http://responsiblewakes.org/?p=714>, and A Wake Surfing Session at <http://responsiblewakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/WakeSurfPathsvideo.mov>

References:

Lake Waramaug Wave Impact Study, Terra Vigilis Environmental Services Group, November 2024
ST. ANTHONY FALLS LABORATORY, Engineering, Environmental and Geophysical Fluid Dynamics, SAFL
Project Report No. 611, A Field Study of Recreational Powerboat Hydrodynamics and their Impacts on

the Water Column and Lakebed, July 2025

Raymond, Bastien, 2015, Impact de la navigation en milieu lacustre – étude sur la remise en suspension des sédiments : Cas du Lac Masson et du Lac des Sables,

Marr, Jeffrey; Riesgraf, Andrew; Herb, William; Lueker, Matthew; Kozarek, Jessica; Hill, Kimberly; Field Study of Maximum Wave Height, Total Wave Energy, and Maximum Wave Power Produced by Four Recreational Boats on a Freshwater Lake, 2022

I love the lakes and rivers of Vermont for over 60 yrs. I have witnessed wake boats and worry for other people and myself who enjoy the water. On the smaller lakes the bottom is being stirred up promoting invasive species spread.

No scientific data

No violations in over two years

Almost every wakeboat remains on the same lake unlike bass boats (bass tournaments with VT offering no wash down stations) kayaks and Paddle Boards, Canoes etc

Zebra Mussels can be carried from one body of water to another by wildlife along with run off (scientific fact)

Wakeboat captains are extremely alert and realize the responsibility of having fun out on the water.

Proof is no violations in over two years. I oppose all the restrictions until I see research and data proving otherwise from a scientific research firm and not non-profits!

2025 Wake Boat New Restrictions Response-2/18/2026

To Whom It May Concern-

As a Lake Bomoseen landowner and wake boat enthusiast for the past 18 years,
I present the following statement:

Points of opposition to the new wake boat restrictions-

The newly adopted 2024 wake boat restrictions have only been in place for one season.

There have been no reported violations of the 2024 wake boat restrictions.

The concern for AIS is targeting wake boats with no evidence that they are contributing to the problem in an adverse way.

Wake boats are not a concern for shoreline loon habitat. In fact, the loon population is at an all time high.

Newly proposed restrictions will create new safety concerns for wake boats, as well as others recreating on the lakes due to varying regulations.

There is a targeted effort to restrict wake boats, as opposed to making an effort to research and present an all encompassing proposal to preserve the quality of our lakes.

Restricting wake boats, without considering the recreational opportunities they provide to our communities and tax paying citizens and the revenue generated, is fiscally irresponsible.

There are no scientific studies to support the need for further wake boat restrictions.

Therefore, I am OPPOSED to the proposed NEW RESTRICTIONS.

Respectfully Submitted-

Jill M. Dutton

I regularly visit Vermont to stay with friends who have lakeside cottages. I've seen the wakes generated by wake boats and I have great concern about the damage their wakes will cause the environment. Like my friends, I don't think the new rules do enough to protect the few remaining wakesports eligible lakes from invasive species. Concentrating wakesports on fewer lakes and eliminating the Home Lake Rule only increases the risk for those lakes, to the environment and to the physical safety of others who enjoy them.

In my earlier submission I believe I indicated that I support the new ruling. I was confused that this was an amendment to the existing rules. To set the record straight I believe the proposed rule does not go far enough to protect Vermont's small lakes and ponds.

thank you

I support the Vermont DEC's proposed revisions as of February 2026 to its Use of Public Waters Rules that regulate wakesports on inland lakes, in order to emphasize safety and increase protections on the environment, wildlife and property.

In addition, I implore you to add Lake Harvey (Harvey's Lake) to the list of lakes exempt from wakesports.

From the dimensional viewpoint, although the total area of the lake meets the minimum criteria for wakesports, the shape of the lake does not. The minimum required 100-acre wakesports safety zone with a minimum required run of 3000' simply does not fit in the lake without violating the minimum buffer of 500' to shoreline.

Dimensional violation aside, I feel there are a number of important practical reasons why the lake should be exempt. These reasons are based on personal experience as a property owner on the lake for over a dozen years, and as avid user of the lake for recreational use. The first is public safety. The lake is shared by residents and visitors on a variety of watercraft: stand up paddle boards, kayaks, crew boats, row boats, sailboats, pontoon boats, fishing boats and ski boats. The people operating the motorboats are very good about respecting space so that wakes do not swamp the non-motorized watercraft. On a busy boating day, wake boats cannot safely pull wakeboarders in this mix, as the non-motorized boats are dispersed throughout what would be the 100-acre rectangle for wakesports. The large wake presents sudden risk; especially to paddle boarders and kayakers. Constraining non-motorized boats to just the perimeter of the lake is not reasonable. Even on a non-busy boating day, people enjoying non-motorized activity would be at high risk of being swamped by a sudden large wave, since it would be essentially impossible for wake boat operators to maintain adequate distance, given the space constraints. For paddle boarding, waves are always a big concern. When I paddle board, my choice to go out is dependent on weather related wave conditions. Weather related wave conditions can be predicted; swamping from a wake boat wave cannot.

The second reason is in regard to the loons. Harvey's Lake is rare for a lake in Vermont, with two nesting pairs of loons each year. With such a small usable area for the wakesports safety zone on this lake, I'm concerned that the loon nests could be regularly swamped by wake boat wakes. As wake boat usage increase, the vast majority of wake boats on the lake will be operated by day visitors using the public boat ramp. Given the layout of the lake and location of the 100-acre rectangle for the WSZ, it seems unreasonable to expect that all wake boat operators would never turn while underway at the endpoint of the run path and inadvertently swamp a nest.

The third reason is in regard for the overall lake ecosystem. Harvey's Lake is a gem of a Vermont natural resource. The water is clear, natural aquatic vegetation is plentiful, and fish species are plentiful. It has remained free of aquatic invasive species due to the respect of boaters using the public boat ramp, and even more so due to the great job by the volunteers at the boat ramp greeter station, to ensure hull cleanings. As wake boat usage increases, the vast majority of wake boats will enter Harvey's Lake as day visitors via the public boat ramp. Given the risk of transport of AIS in ballast tanks, this could highly increase the risk of AIS contamination to the lake.

I am submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I absolutely oppose the adoption the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through investments in improved training, consistent inspection, and compliance requirements for all boats. Please maintain existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates to limiting policies.

I care because the implementation of these proposed limitations significantly effects fair access to wakesports recreation. This policy would cause a consolidation of wakesports in permitted lakes which, in turn, could create unsafe conditions for participants and lake recreation in general. Please vote no to changing Use of Vermont Public Waters policy.

In reviewing the proposed rule changes, I argue that these changes really need to exclude wake boats on Lake Fairlee.

This lake is very busy with small craft sailboats, canoes, kayaks and small boats. The wake boats are a hazard by creating unusually large wakes that disrupt the small craft which are not able to safely navigate large waves. Many of these small craft are young campers just learning to handle their craft. Lake Fairlee has summer camps for youth to learn to swim, canoe, and sail small craft, as well as many family camps around the lake. Imagine a youngster trying to learn to swim and foot high waves suddenly swamp his efforts.

I live near the lake in Post Mills, kayak the lake often, swim at Treasurer Island town beach, and love the tranquility of Lake Fairlee. Few power boats, and yes some summer camps offer water skiing.

Wake boats really unfairly disrupt the peace common to so many small craft and swimmers. I think ANR/DEC must really respect the majority of users of the Lake Fairlee, and prohibit activities that disregard the safety of everyone else enjoying the lake.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data.

On my Pop's boat, we make sure that we stay in the middle of the lake, away from other boats, away from the the docks on the shore, and we use our boat safely. We have fun surfing in the summertime. Please don't change the rules so we can still have fun on Pop's boat in the summertime.

Please revise the proposed wakesports rule changes. The 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer would significantly restrict access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data.

On Pop's boat we like to have snacks, swim, surf a lot with my mommy, and have dance parties. I would feel really sad if we don't get to use our boat. I really like the boat on hot days. We are safe on our boat, we stay away from other boats, and away from the sides where the docks are. We follow the rules on Pop's boat. I would be sad to not use our boat.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I care because Vermont's lakes should be protected through clear, enforceable, evidence-based rules that balance access and environmental health. This proposal could significantly reduce where wakesports are permitted without strong Vermont-specific data to support the thresholds. Please keep the existing framework and focus on targeted, science-driven updates along with consistent AIS prevention and compliance.

Lake Willoughby has several pairs of nesting bald eagles, which will be disturbed by noise and wakes (birds will hard to fish when the lake surface isn't calm!). Same goes for loons. We have the opportunity to make Lake W more and more of a wildlife sanctuary if we begin now with restrictions on motorized boats ... eventually all internal combustion powered boats.

Returning Lake W to its late 19th century "vibe" of oar-powered fishing canoes and skiffs will benefit the value of all properties around the lake. Let's begin by banning wake boats.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates.

As a resident of Vermont, I oppose these proposed changes to current legislation 25P045:

"The wakesports provisions are substantially modified by eliminating the "Home Lake" rule and proof of decontamination requirements, prohibiting wakesports within 500 feet of loon nesting sites and from other users, and requiring wakesports zones to meet new acreage, length, and configuration standards."

These proposed changes would have negative, long-term environmental and economic impacts on communities across the state. Wakeboats are such a small percentage of motorized boat operations on Vermont's public waters, and I've heard no justification that duly weighs the decades of environmental data on the impacts of wakesports on inland lakes and ponds (erosion, invasives, habitat destruction). On the proposed change to proof of decontamination requirements, I do not believe current wakeboat decontamination requirements are strict enough. and I do not believe these requirements should ever be modified except to be more comprehensive over time. The DEC should have a consistent message on the value of these procedures to the public, and to actively prevent lasting and expensive damage to the wetlands of our beautiful state by opposing these legislative changes.

Hello — I'm writing to submit a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. This matters to me because I care deeply about our lakes and how they're used. I believe strongly that responsible recreation and environmental protection can absolutely coexist when regulations are practical, balanced, and grounded in real data.

From my perspective, this proposal feels overly restrictive, particularly with the broad acreage, distance, and buffer requirements, and I haven't seen clear evidence showing that changes of this scale are necessary. I worry that these rules could significantly limit responsible lake users without meaningfully improving lake health.

I respectfully urge you to maintain the current framework and focus lake protection efforts on inspections, education, and targeted improvements that address specific, documented concerns. Thoughtful, data-driven solutions will protect our lakes while preserving access for families and communities who use them responsibly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have been going to Lake Harvey in the summer for the last 40 years and it one of the most special lakes in all of the Northeast. And now my young kids swim in the lake in the summer. Unfortunately, there have been several examples of wakeboats getting too close to my kids swimming in the lake and created a dangerous environment because the lake is too small and narrow to safely have wakeboats / wakesports.

I request that Lake Harvey be added to the list of lakes exempt from wakesports.

Our family has the privilege to be able to spend quality time together wakesurfing on Lake Bomoseen. We are to support and cheer each other on and laugh together through this awesome water sport. We are always adamant about safety, whether it being aware of boats around us, canoes or kayaks, or wildlife. We pick up trash we find floating while we are out as well. It would be devastating to our kids and family to lose this amazing pastime.

My husband grew up coming to Lake Harvey and over the last 15 years I have gotten to experience the specialness of Lake Harvey when we visit. We have young kids who like to swim in the lake and the wakeboats makes me very nervous, and creates a dangerous environment for my children. Not to mention the risk to the loons that make Lake Harvey so special.

I request Lake Harvey be added to the list of lakes exempt from wakesports.

Ban wake sports on Lake Harvey. Yes

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates.

I care because it gives our family a great shred experience where we can support each other and have fun. I urge you to reconsider this proposal and how this will affect the lake community and families.

1. Vermont's current rule is already one of the most restrictive in the country, so why changes it? No one has really answered that question
2. There seems to be a shortage of facts and abundance of opinions and emotions that doesn't really help the problems. We need more fact based decisions
3. The newest regulations were implemented about two years ago, so we've gone through two summers with them. To The best of my knowledge there's been very little complaints, issues or citations with them.
4. We haven't lived with the newest regulations long enough to fully understand how they've impact our lakes. And it's too soon to make more demanding and impactful changes with new regulations.
5. Some of the new proposed regulations will be very difficult to manage. It will create specific moving wake boat zones around each boat 500 X 3000, that will be difficult to enforce and hard to keep track of. So if a boat crosses into my wake zone path through no fault of my own, who's the problem and who will be held accountable.
6. It will also create two sets of rules, one for wake boats and one for traditional motor boats, doesn't make sense.
7. How will these changes help impact the invasive species problem that we have in almost all the lakes in the states. All boats can carry invasive species from one lake to the next and there's probably 20,000 of these boats on our lakes during the summer in Vermont. There's only 300 wake boats in the state and for the most part there is very limited movement from lake to lake so how much of a problem are they really?
8. These rules would reduce the amounts of usable from 30 lakes to 18 lake.
9. There's only 300 wakes boats in Vermont and there more than 20,000 motor boats, pantoon and fishing boats in Vermont. Their acting like limiting or fixing or removing the 300 or 1% of all wake boats from Vermont lake will solve most of the problems. This ignores the huge balance of remaining boats

with no changes required from them what so ever, really. Their not the problem so they don't have to make any changes what so ever, really who are we kidding?

The proposal to ban wakesports on lake Harvey makes sense.

I have been a camp owner on Holland Pond for 40+ years. Our cherished quiet pond is one of the last, with camps on one side only, protected by the state on opposite shores. I am a Loon count volunteer and utilize the surrounding area to its fullest on trails and water in kayaks and canoes. Our children have grown up here along with our friends and neighbors who respect this environment, pond and area along with a great many other outdoor enthusiasts that appreciate a quieter off the beaten track resource. The whole pond is extremely shallow on its perimeters which extends quite a distance out into the pond. The appropriate depth in the middle is limited at best. This past year the water level was the lowest I have ever experience in all the years I have been here, well over a foot+, another reason with the severity of climate shifts we are beginning to experience.

Wake sports are a hazard to small boat users on Holland Pond (kayaks, canoes, sailboats, paddle boards, fishing skiffs). Add that to wind and the young and less experienced paddling boaters are endangered, as my own children have experienced. The large wakes threaten nesting loons. Wake boats may introduce aquatic invasive species like milfoil and zebra mussels. Sediment is stirred up impacting important vegetation that supports fish. Our small pond is too small for huge wake boats.

There is a need and a place for quieter boating lakes for those that appreciated what they have to offer!

My name is June Bascom and I live in Montpelier. I want to express my support of the proposed amendments. They are a good compromise, however, they do not go far enough. I have submitted numerous petitions to ANR over the past 3-1/2 years in support of restricting the operation of wake boats in Vermont.

I strongly recommend changing back to the originally proposed 1,000' safety offset and distance from shore and a minimum of 30' depth. Frankly, this should be implemented for all power boats that run at speed due to the severe degradation to the shoreline from waves. I also emphatically recommend that additional protections be added that address that spread of AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) – such as limiting wake boats only to lakes that have decontamination stations and greater support of the Greeter Program.

I understand it is not possible for ANR to meet the wants and needs of all lake users through regulations when there are serious conflicting interests in how people use the lakes. As a former water skier, I understand the attraction of wake boarding. However, wake boats are not compatible with the needs of the overwhelming majority of lake users and of the health of the lakes themselves.

Critically important changes include:

- The increase of safety offset to 500'.
- The decontamination requirement to avoid the spread of AIS.
- The allowance for temporary emergency closures to protect private property and public health, particularly given the extreme changes in lake levels in recent years – both high water due to floods and low water due to droughts.

If the rules as proposed are not implemented, there will irreversible damage caused by wake boats. It is ultimately ANR's responsibility to manage VT lakes in ways that do the least amount of harm to the lake themselves so they remain clean, healthy and safe bodies of water.

Thanks to the hard work of ANR staff, the amendments strike a reasonable compromise that protect the quality of lakes and shoreline property as well as the safety of lake users – including wake boarders.

While many of us hoped for stricter protections, and would like to see more robust protections, these changes still allow wake boats to operate while protecting the safety of others and the health of the lakes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

June Bascom
Montpelier

I oppose all of the proposed 2025 rule, specifically the 100-acre lake threshold, the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, the expanded interpretation of a 500-foot buffer from “any object” within the wakezone, application of Normal and Non Normal use, and Section 3.7 and 4.3 Municipalities changes, and I support maintaining the 2024 rule as written. The way the scientific findings are being translated into the proposed regulatory thresholds introduces important differences between what the science evaluates and how the rule uses those numbers. The gap between measured environmental science and policy expansion is central to this comment. I respectfully request that ANR retain the 2024 rule structure and avoid adopting the proposed rule provisions.

According to 10 VSA §1424, "To the extent possible, the Secretary shall provide for all normal uses." In addition, in the Use of Public Water (UPW) rules, Section 2.7 (a) states: "Use conflicts shall be managed in a manner that provides for all normal uses to the greatest extent possible consistent with the provisions of Section 2.2 of these Rules."

As defined in UPW Rule 5.6: "Normal use" means any lawful use of any specific body of public water that occurred on a regular, frequent, and consistent basis prior to January 1, 1993." This seems quite clear to me.

Since wake sports do not meet the definition of normal use and accommodation of non-normal uses is not required under either statute or UPW rules, I object to a process that allows wake sports and other activities that do not meet this definition to take place on the state's public waters without first proving that such activity does not damage aquatic habitat, cause increased phosphorus or pollutants to enter the water, contribute to shoreline erosion or lake bottom disruption, or have the potential to spread aquatic invasive species (AIS). Wake boats should only be allowed on Lake Champlain and Memphremagog.

I regularly visit Vermont to stay with friends who have lakeside cottages. I've seen the wakes generated by wake boats and I have great concern about the damage their wakes will cause the environment. Like my friends, I don't think the new rules do enough to protect the few remaining wakesports eligible lakes from invasive species. Concentrating wakesports on fewer lakes and eliminating the Home Lake rule only increases the risk for those lakes - to the environment and to the physical safety of others who enjoy them.

I support the proposed changes to the rules with 2 exceptions. Both of which come down to - let's not destroy the environment for the sake of accommodating the "needs" of a small group of users. We have worked very hard for decades to maintain our lakes and ponds.

A) I believe the 20' deep criteria for a wakesport zone should be increased to 30' to minimize scouring of the lakebed which among other negative impacts can release imbedded phosphorous. A major cause/source of algae blooms. Lake Morey, suffering algae blooms throughout the summer, is a prime example of a relatively shallow lake that has just undergone an alum treatment to lock down the phosphorus. Let's not destroy that effort. This is one of my "go to" lakes for kayaking that I have "gone to" less over the past few seasons because of the algae.

B) Secondly the Home Rule should be maintained as there is currently no infrastructure in place (decontamination stations) to adequately clean the ballast tanks. There is no need to rush being able to move a wakesport boat from lake to lake at the expense of potentially spreading invasives from lake to lake. The sport needs to grow the sport slowly and safely.

And finally let's view the regulations on wakesports as - work in progress. Maybe some tweaking needed as more of us have interactions with them. I am an avid kayaker, who has yet to encounter one. I am very happy the DEC is considering making changes to the Wakesports rules.

My concerns are about boater and swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion.

*I am strongly in favor of increasing the minimum wakesports zone to at least 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Please do not compromise on this.

*I also am very much in favor of expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet - OR MORE - from other users or in water structures. The limited visibility of the wakeboat drivers troubles me. Our family kayaks, swims, and sails. We'd like to continue to do so in safety.

Through lots of effort, Echo Lake is still clear of the invasive Milfoil. We want to keep it that way! I still remember the astonishment and dismay I felt when I was at the top of Pisgah, and looked down and could actually see all the Milfoil in Willoughby.

I support the DEC's changes because of concerns about safety, invasive species, and shoreline erosion.

I support increasing the minimum wakesports zone to at least 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). I also support expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet or more. I've enjoyed swimming, kayaking, and sailing the lake for many years.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

I have lived on Lake Morey since 1995, and over the past three decades I have seen firsthand how sensitive and special this 500-acre lake truly is. For this reason, I am deeply concerned about the use of wake boat activity on the lake.

The state has recently invested nearly one million dollars to address the serious algae bloom that affected the Lake Morey- a bloom widely understood to have been fueled by legacy phosphates sealed in the lakebed. These phosphates have remained relatively stable when undisturbed. However, wake boats are specifically designed to churn large volumes of water and generate powerful surf by operating with ballast systems that increase displacement. In a lake as small and relatively shallow as Lake Morey, this activity has the real potential to disturb bottom sediments-especially in the north end and re-suspend legacy phosphates, effectively undoing the State's financial and environmental investment. In addition, wake boats present a documented risk of spreading invasive species. Their ballast and bilge systems can retain and transport water-and with it, invasive organisms. The State has already spent many thousand of dollars combating invasive species in Lake Morey. Allowing a boating practice the increases the likelihood of re-infestation or new introductions would put both taxpayer dollars and the lake's ecological health at risk.

There are also safety and quality of life concerns. The large powerful waves generated by these boats are a hazard to other lake users, particularly kayakers, paddleboarders, swimmers and campers. These waves are not comparable to typical recreational boating wakes; they are intentionally amplified and sustained. In a 500 acre lake, there is limited space for safe separation between high-wake activity and other recreational uses.

I have also personally observed increased shoreline erosion in recent years. The amplified waves produced by these boats accelerate erosion, destabilize banks, and damage personal property (docks) and natural habitat. On a smaller lake like Lake Morey, wave energy has less distance to dissipate, intensifying shoreline impacts.

Wildlife must also be considered. Loons nest (or try to) on Lake Morey. Their nests sit inches above the waterline and are extremely vulnerable to repeated wave action. Sustained artificial wakes pose a serious threat to nesting success and could down nests outright, undermining ongoing conservation efforts.

Lake Morey is simply not large or deep enough to safely and sustainably accommodate wake boat activity. Allowing this use risks reversing substantial public investment, degrading water quality, accelerating shoreline erosion, threatening wildlife, spreading invasive species, and vastly diminishing the safety and enjoyment of the lake for the broader community.

I urge decision makers to carefully consider the long term ecological, financial and community costs by

prohibiting their use on Lake Morey. It is unfair and unreasonable that the larger and general lake community must sacrifice quiet enjoyment for the benefit of a privileged few.

Wake Boat Regulation's Change: Totally against the proposed changes due to the concern of contamination

of our very clean lakes. The property owners should have a huge say about these changes.

Please exempt Lake Harvey from WAKE SPORTS. The lake is being adversely affected in many negative ways from shoreline erosion to rude behavior and disregard by these boats. Please Ban them now.

The damages created by wakeboats require all the stricter regulations proposed, for the safety of other boaters, swimmers, loons, shoreline integrity, and the health of the water itself if invasives are transported. As a lakefront camp owner, a swimmer, kayaker, and occasional small motorboat user, I am deeply concerned that the thrill-seeking of the few not pre-empt the simpler pleasures of the many, as is the Vermont way.

Ban the wakeboats now on this small lake. Totally unacceptable for many reasons environmental and danger to others.

I'm writing as a resident of Fairlee and a lifelong supporter of responsible recreation on Lake Morey to respectfully request your support in opposing any blanket ban on wake boats or wake-surfing activities on our lake.

Lake Morey has long been a shared resource for residents, boaters, swimmers, and families who enjoy a range of recreational uses. Thanks to recent scientific assessments and the successful alum treatment conducted in 2024, the lake is in excellent condition, with phosphorus levels well below state thresholds. The health of the lake continues to benefit from collaborative stewardship and sound environmental management.

While concerns have been raised about wake sports, it's important to note that Vermont's 2024 wakeboat rule already imposes strict operational guidelines—minimum lake size, depth, and setback requirements—to protect shoreline integrity and water quality. Lake Morey currently meets those standards. Additional restrictions or outright bans would not only penalize responsible boaters who are already operating within the law but would also set a concerning precedent of regulating based on perception rather than data.

I believe there is room for balanced lake use that respects both environmental health and public enjoyment. Rather than banning a single activity, we should focus on education, compliance, and enforcement of the existing rules that were carefully designed by the Department of Environmental Conservation with input from experts and citizens across the state.

I urge you to stand with residents and lake users who believe in fair, fact-based policymaking and who value shared access to public waters. Your leadership and voice would be incredibly helpful in ensuring that Lake Morey remains open, safe, and enjoyable for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to speak further or provide additional information if it would be helpful.

Sincerely,
Shawn & Laura Byron
Fairlee, Vermont

I support certain of DEC's proposed wakesports rules changes, such as increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run) and expanding safety buffers to 500 feet from other users.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. With the number of lakes permitting wake boats reduced, those lakes will see more wakesport activity and must have more protection against the introduction of invasive species. Good intentions have not resulted in prevention and our lakes deserve better protections, I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

My statement for January 27, 2026 Public Hearing

Zebra mussels - Science magazine has referred to them as "one of the most catastrophic aquatic invasive species in North America." And they are on our doorstep - in the American waters of Memphremagog, and in lakes just north of the border.

A Minnesota study published in 2018 called wake boats "zebra mussels' best friend." The study concluded the best way for zebra mussel larvae to get from one Minnesota lake to another is in wakeboard boat ballast tanks.

My concern tonight is for the 17 or 18 lakes that will remain on the wakesports eligible list when this rulemaking process is over.

Reading the proposed rules suggests that any AIS problem is taken care of with hot water decontamination. The problem is hot water decontamination is not easily available in Vermont. There are 2 or 3 stations on Champlain, but they are only staffed part time. They are nowhere near most of the lakes that will remain on the list. Our local boat wash stations are not capable of providing this service, nor will they ever be.

The DEC has spent months developing a plan for decontamination. Despite concern from stakeholders - our lakes' direct representatives to this process - the DEC's focus has been and remains on decontamination for all types of vessels rather than the very immediate threat posed by wake boats. While I applaud a draft long range plan, there is no timeline, and there is no funding.

This exercise has taken up enormous amounts of staff time. Perhaps some of that could have or should have been spent implementing the home lake rule that would prevent wake boats from traveling between lakes and emptying ballast water that may contain AIS in each. Instead, proposed changes eliminate the home lake rule and any real protection our remaining wakesports eligible lakes would have in the immediate future.

This strategy has potentially catastrophic consequences. Proposed rules succeed in protecting more of the state's smaller lakes and I celebrate that. The proposed rules also - unnecessarily - leave our remaining wakesports eligible lakes facing an unacceptable risk from invasives.

Diane Z. Lehder - Statement at February 4, 2026 Public Hearing

Last spring, the DEC summarily denied nine lake petitions seeking to prohibit wakesports on their lakes. In doing so, the DEC committed to addressing shared concerns in revisions to the Use of Public Waters Rules.

Increasing the size of wake sports zones now protects some smaller lakes by removing them from the eligible list. Increasing buffers to shorelines and others on the water increases safety for those who will share remaining wakesports eligible lakes. It is critical these changes are adopted immediately to improve safety on our lakes - a concern shared by the lakes submitting those petitions.

New scientific studies are already telling us some proposed changes still don't go far enough. In states where wakesports are regulated by state laws based on the very permissive Water Sports Industry Association's "model law," it's already too late for many lakes. Aside from the environmental damage caused by their overly large wakes, people on those lakes who used to enjoy the water - regularly report they avoid the water when wake boats are in use because they are concerned about their safety.

We have a chance now to get at least some of it right. Proposed changes in the interest of safety bring immediate, absolute protection for more than a handful of our smaller lakes. And they make our remaining wakesports eligible lakes safer, too. Please, adopt these changes. Make sure they are in place for the 2026 boating season.

I remain disappointed decontamination still remains a problem seeking a solution - and that a home lake rule that would provide a measure of protection for our water quality is being eliminated.

That said, and taking a very pragmatic approach, right now we need to do what we can - adopt and implement what we can - for the 2026 boating season.

And we need to continue to work together - to do what still needs to be done - to protect our larger lakes and all those who share them - better than they are protected now.

We love Willoughby Lake and have a presence on it since the mid 1950s. We love it for its quiet and serenity and natural beauty. We believe wake boats would not contribute to those qualities we hold so dear. We are concerned about wildlife (loons, ducks, etc.) canoers, kayakers, paddleboarders and swimmers. We are concerned about wake boats potentially bringing invasive species into the lake via their ballast tanks. The Willoughby residents plus Westmore Association were successful in banning jet skis; we hope we can do the same for wake boats.

As a 25 year resident of Thetford, VT and conservation commission member, I am writing to request the DEC adopt the proposed rule changes from Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes, and that the rules be implemented as written, with no exceptions for single-boat operations, or time of day flexibility. We believe the need to prohibit wakesports on Lake Fairlee is very clear and a matter of protecting public safety and Lake Fairlee's unique ecosystem.

There are 5 summer camps directly adjacent to the area currently proposed for wakeboat use on Lake Fairlee, which means each summer there is a very high concentration of young children and inexperienced boaters in this area. It is essential that we take their safety seriously and acknowledge that a safety buffer of at least 500 feet would be required for them to safely be on the water with wake boats.

Because of the small size of Lake Fairlee, the large wakes from a single boat will still be too dangerous for children and inexperienced boaters. Time of day exceptions are also not realistic for addressing safety; in the summer people and boats are constantly on Lake Fairlee, especially at the camps.

I am also very concerned with loon conservation on Lake Fairlee and in other Vermont lakes. Here again, I ask the department to follow research backed guidelines and expand the safety buffer for nesting loons from 300 to 500 feet. Our local loons nest near Thetford's public beach on Lake Fairlee, and are a facet of our local ecosystem that the entire community cherishes.

The spread of aquatic invasive species is also very concerning. In Lake Fairlee specifically, the Lake Fairlee Association has worked for years to reduce Eurasian milfoil. Allowing wake boat operation, where the bow is considerably raised and the stern considerably lowered, increases the propellers' ability to shred and spread milfoil. Wake boat operation on the lake would undermine past and future efforts to control this invasive species.

I believe that the public needs to be able to enjoy our local natural resources, like Lake Fairlee, without the safety risks posed by wake boats. Additionally, the scale of wake boats' ecological impact on Lake Fairlee, from affecting nesting loons, to spreading eurasian milfoil would be terrible. I strongly support the proposed rule changes that more realistically balance public safety and environmental conservation with wake boat use.

Thank you,
Jim McCracken

As a resident of Thetford, Vt, I have enjoyed many aspects of Lake Fairlee for the last 25 years. This nearby lake has been a year-round "go to haven" for peace, tranquility and recreation. There is a timeless quality to the lake - reinforced by its history, beauty and stringent development policies.

For over 100 years, campers have been taught the basics of swimming, boating and water safety. Visitors, locals and shoreline homeowners have also shown their respect for protecting the lake and posted regulations. However, this sense of protection is changing. Like a new invasive species, the introduction of the wake boat has emerged as a dangerous threat to the lake and those who use it. Unsuspecting boaters and swimmer of all ages, can no longer be assured of safe recreation. (I was riveted with fear once, when kayaking in proximity to a wake boat.) The ensuing environmental concerns also pose a threat to the stability of the lake. Whether it's long term shore line erosion, displacement of wildlife or aquatic invasives, Lake Fairlee will struggle to be the lake it was if wake boats are allowed.

The new policy changes do not go far enough. The few thrill seekers who own wake boats on Lake Fairlee may set a dangerous precedent for the allowance of more wake boats in the future. It is likely that these boats will be engineered to create larger and more destructive waves. The very few wake boat enthusiasts who enjoy quick thrills at the expense of others, pose a substantial threat; the boats are dangerous to people and the environment. Wake boats should not be permitted anywhere on Lake Fairlee, as they will eventually cause irreparable harm.

I AM WRITING TO OFFER MY SUPPORT OF THE DEC'S PROPOSED STATEWIDE WAKESPORTS RULES AS THEY WOULD APPLY TO WILLOUGHBY LAKE.

MY FAMILY FIRST CAME TO THE TOWN OF WESTMORE AND WILLOUGHBY LAKE IN 1949. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO COME AND ENJOY THE GIFTS OF NATURE OFFERED BY THIS PRISTINE GLACIAL WONDER. OVER THE SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS I HAVE BEEN SUMMERING HERE THERE HAVE BEEN MANY CHANGES TO THE WAYS IN WHICH THE LAKE HAS BEEN ENJOYED BY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. CHANGE, OF COURSE, IS INEVITABLE AND IS ACCEPTABLE SO LONG AS IT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE VALUES AND HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

MY FAMILY, RANGING IN AGE FROM THE VERY YOUNG TO OCTOGENARIANS, HAVE BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE MOST FORTUNATE TO SPEND THE SUMMER OR, AT LEAST VACATION, AT WILLOUGHBY LAKE. WE SWIM, KAYACK, PADDLE BOARD AND WATER SKI ON THE LAKE. ALL OF THESE ACTIVITIES WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE USE OF WAKESPORTS BOATS. CAN SWIMMERS SAFELY SWIM ACROSS THE PATH OF THESE BOATS? CAN KAYAKS AND PADDLE BOARDS DEAL WITH THE WAKES GENERATED BY THESE BOATS? CAN THE YOUNG KIDS DEAL WITH THE WAVES NEAR THE SHORE WHERE THEY PLAY AND LEARN TO SWIM? WHAT ABOUT THE SHORELINES THEMSELVES WHERE LOONS NEST OR THE BEACH FRONTS THAT CANNOT BE REBUILT IF DAMAGED OR WASHED AWAY?

IN FAIRNESS WE DON'T KNOW THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS. HOWEVER, WE CERTAINLY SHOULD NOT BE SWAYED BY THE OPINIONS OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES WITH FINANCIAL INTERESTS IN OPPOSING THESE RULES.

IT IS MY OPINION, AS A VERMONT PROPERTY TAX PAYER AND LIFE LONG USER OF WILLOUGHBY LAKE, THAT AT THE VERY LEAST WAKESPORTS NEED TO BE RESTRICTED AS SET OUT IN THE DEC'S PROPOSED STATEWIDE WAKESPORTS RULES.

IT IS ALSO MY OPINION THAT THE DEC SHOULD AMEND THE RULES TO REQUIRE THEY BE REVISITED AND EVALUATED IN A SPECIFIED PERIOD AS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS.

To whom it may concern:

I am an avid kayaker and swimmer in Vermont's lakes, and I also volunteer removing aquatic invasive species in the waterways intersecting with Lake Champlain. I do not support DEC's decision to remove the Home Lake Rule which is the best way to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. It runs counter to all the work many volunteers, non-profit watershed organizations and financial donors do to prevent this spread. Why would we impose conflicting policies on our people and environment?

I want DEC to incorporate new science and the Precautionary Principle to better protect Vermont's waters and users. I support the updated rule with added/stronger protections as follows:

- Minimum 30-foot water depth requirement (Supported by new studies, including the Lake Waramaug research. [LINK](#))
- 700-foot setback from shorelines, loon nests, and other lake users (The St. Anthony Falls Laboratory study recommended over 500 ft for wave height and, more importantly, 600 ft for wave power. During the initial drafting of the 2024 rule, the DEC staff recommended 600 ft. Incorporating the Precautionary Principle supports a 700 ft setback.)
- Adding an explicit statement of and commitment to the Precautionary Principle within the UPWR such as this:
"When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."
- Amending the UPWR to include a statement that wake sports are NOT a "normal" use and therefore require special consideration and rules that differ from those that apply to "normal," i.e., traditional, uses.

Thank you for your serious consideration,
Myra Handy

I write to support the proposed rule and to urge the state to take additional measures to protect the public's use of public water. I do not own lake front property but I am an avid kayaker and angler. The rule is needed to ensure public safety, to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, to protect the aquatic environment from phosphorus pollution, and to ensure Vermont's lakes are available for all to enjoy.

1. Safety. Large motor craft that generate large waves pose a threat to swimmers, kayakers and sailors of small boats. In the initial round of rulemaking several years ago, the state acknowledged it did not have expertise in safety planning when developing the rules adopted in 2024. This latest iteration is a step in the right direction but still does not go far enough.
 2. Invasive species. Invasive aquatic species pose a threat to our beautiful lakes. Shortly after wake boats came to Joe's Pond, that waterbody experienced an outbreak of Eurasian water milfoil. Since it is difficult if not impossible to fully empty and clean the ballast tanks of wake boats, the rule is needed to protect lakes not yet infected by invasive species.
 3. Environmental protection. Vermont has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to curb phosphorus pollution. Wake boats, with their downward thrusting propellers, churn up lake sediment to a depth of at least 20 feet, releasing more phosphorus into the water. Further, large waves crashing on the shoreline will also release phosphorus as well as cause damage to the sensitive littoral zone – the nursery and the spawning areas of the lake used by insects and the fish that feed on them.
 4. Public trust doctrine. Wake boats threaten the fundamental equity embodied in the public trust doctrine, which holds that the waters of the state are held in trust for all to use and enjoy. The state estimates about 100 wake boats are in use in Vermont. By contrast, tens of thousands of people enjoy quiet water pursuits. Yet the kayaker seeking a peaceful paddle across a lake is likely to turn back in the face of a mini tsunami. A mom teaching her kid to sail will have to find a breeze close to shore. Wake boats effectively create an "exclusion zone" by confining the vast majority of lake users to shoreline areas, where the best angling, sailing or paddling may not be found.
 5. Holland Pond. A final word about Holland Pond, where I have fished at stayed at a friend's camp for many years. The pond, bordered by a large wildlife management area, offers a true wilderness experience where loons, moose and bald eagles thrive. I enthusiastically support the proposed rule that would ensure that wake boats are kept off this beautiful water body. The pond is simply too small for wake boats to operate safely without threatening other users and the environment.
- My sincere thanks to the state employees who have worked tirelessly on this issue!

I believe a lot of the proposed changes make sense and I support with some reservation. I realize the challenges of a home lake rule requiring stickers is challenging to enforce, I support all boats being inspected for AIS before launching on any Vermont waters. I support the state's endeavor to provide more decontamination stations. Whereas I spend summers on Lake Morey, I am weary of allowing more lakes to prohibit wake sports that may increase wake sports on Morey, though we have had very few wake boats launched on our lake, and have not experienced any issues. I believe there is a lot of misinformation being spread resulting in negative publicity for wake sports, I hope decisions are based on science and not fear. I support empowering the secretary to make changes and believe that "nuanced" solutions may be necessary. I would support rulings that would limit the size of wake boats, the wake boats currently recreating on Morey have not been an issue but a 26 ft wake boat could potentially be harmful.

Thank you for all the energy expended on this issue!!!

Dear ANR/DEC Committee,

I am writing to you in support of wakesports on Lake Morey.

For generations, Lake Morey has been a place where neighbors gather, families make memories, and visitors enjoy everything from early-morning swims to summer afternoons on the water. It's one of the few places where a wide variety of recreational activities can happen side-by-side, and that balance is part of what makes the lake special. I worry that a blanket ban on wake boats or wake-surfing would break that balance.

The Vermont 2024 Wakeboat Rule puts strict safeguards in place (such as setback distances, minimum lake size, and depth requirements) to protect both shorelines and water quality. These regulations were crafted through a thoughtful, science-based process involving experts and community voices from across the state. Lake Morey meets these standards.

We've also seen real success in protecting the lake's health. The alum treatment completed in 2024, combined with years of collaborative stewardship, has brought phosphorus levels well below state thresholds. This isn't a lake in decline—it's a lake in great condition thanks to hard work, community commitment, and effective environmental management.

Adding extra restrictions or outright bans would unfairly target boaters who follow the rules, while doing little to improve on the protections we already have. Instead of singling out one activity, the more constructive approach is to educate users, ensure compliance, and keep enforcing the safeguards that are already in place.

As a resident of Fairlee and someone who has spent a lifetime enjoying and protecting Lake Morey, I hope you'll support policies that keep our lake safe, healthy, and accessible for everyone. Your leadership can help preserve both the environmental quality and the shared enjoyment that make this place so important to our community.

Thank you for your time,

Maddie Stearns
1106 Lake Morey Rd
Fairlee VT 05045

The data proves that Lake Morey is deep enough, yet for some reason these people are still trying to eliminate wake boats that have served as a positive to Lake Morey and the Fairlee general economy, via summer tourism, for decades now. In this case, science and actual fact should hold more weight than the opinion of non-lake goers.

I live full-time on Lake Groton and am grateful that our lake no longer allows wake sports. I believe the current regulations do not go far enough to protect Vermont's precious resources - our lakes and ponds. We, like most lakefront property owners, have seen significant erosion of our shorelines around the lake.

Lake Groton has a state campground, as well as a public day-use beach so in addition to camp and homeowners, there are a large number of people with kayaks, canoes, sailboats, stand-up paddleboards and swimmers. The wake sports put up significant waves that can overwhelm swimmers and small boats. We have observed people being swamped by wake boats engaged in wake sports and it impacts when we and our guests, grandchildren and others feel comfortable being in or on the water. We have seen jet skis too close to wake boats trying to ride the wakes. The safety buffers should be increased to at least 500' from other users or structures in the water. With the exception of a small area, Lake Groton is less than 20' deep. Because of how the boats take water into their ballasts, depth should also be taken into account in determining which lakes should be approved for wake sports. These types of factors (depth of body of water, current usage such as public beaches and campgrounds and water depth) should be a part of the determination of whether or not to allow wake sports on any body of water.

While wake sports are not allowed by law on Lake Groton, there are several wake boats on the lake and we believe that some of them are at times engaging in prohibited wake sports. The infrastructure is not in place to police these rules and neighbors tend not to report their neighbors for noncompliance, nor should it be our responsibility. Additionally, there are wake boats that come into the state campground or are visitors to property owners. There is no way to verify if the transient boats, as well as the resident boats, are in compliance with the "Home Lake Rule" for proper hot water decontamination.

I strongly urge you to strengthen the current regulations.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced so that will put pressure on the lakes permitting wake boats. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

I have been summering on lake Fairlee all my life through the Aloha Camps. To allow wakesports would change the whole reason we love this lake. The bald eagle flying up above. The sounds of the loons waking me up in the morning. An early morning swim or afternoon kayak or canoe across the lake would be difficult with Wake Boats. Not to mention the safety of the campers. Lake Fairlee is a place to learn about and enjoy nature.

I believe you should maintain the standards without exception.

Don't change why people love this lake.

Respectfully

Katherine Kavanagh

I am writing to address the proposed 3,000-foot length requirement and the significant impact it will have on lake eligibility across our state. According to the Agency's own summary of proposed changes, this specific run length requirement is a primary factor in reducing the number of eligible lakes from 30 down to only 18. This drastic reduction in public access is being proposed without the necessary scientific justification to support such a specific dimension.

When looking at the historical context of this rulemaking, the original 2022 petition justified 60 acres as a sufficient area for compatible use. At that time, the 3,000-foot straight-line run requirement was not part of the original acreage-based reasoning. The introduction of this new criterion represents a significant shift in policy that lacks a clear connection to the initial goals of the rulemaking process. From a scientific perspective, there is a notable gap in the data provided. Hydrodynamic research shows that shoreline wave energy is a result of water depth, shoreline slope, and distance from the shore. It is not determined by how long a boat travels in a straight line. To date, no Vermont-based field study has been presented that compares sediment disturbance or shoreline force between different run lengths. Without this research, the 3,000-foot requirement appears to be an arbitrary number rather than an environmental necessity.

This leads to a direct and necessary question for the Agency: What measured Vermont environmental data shows that a lake supporting a 2,000-foot run is environmentally unsuitable, but suddenly becomes acceptable at 3,000 feet? If the Agency is going to remove access to public waters for a large portion of the population, that decision must be supported by site-specific evidence of environmental necessity.

The current 2024 rules were the result of extensive negotiation and compromise. Moving the goalposts again so soon, and using a metric that is not supported by science, undermines the public trust in the resource management the Agency is sworn to uphold. I urge the Agency to stick to the principles of data-driven regulation and maintain the existing standards until actual Vermont-based research can prove a need for change.

I support the changes proposed by DEC.

There are limited areas open for wake boating but I feel that the size and shape of lake Willoughby by dramatically limit balanced use and effect on the lake and on the shoreline. I have used the lake for both power and paddle sports throughout my life since 50 years and have always encourage more to do the same. I feel wake boats have an out sized effect on all others who use the lake and have had personal experience with the unexpected wakes hitting known boat and shoreline causing falls and property damage.

Additionally I do not support the removal of the home rule. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced likely putting pressure on the lakes permitting wake boats. Without the Home Rule, these fewer lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

Hi there,

My name is Patrick Byron, a resident of Fairlee/Lake Morey VT, and I am writing to formally oppose the proposed changes to the Vermont Use of Public Waters Rules that would restrict wake sports on our lake.

As a supporter of responsible recreation, I believe a ban is unnecessary for the following reasons:

Proven Lake Health: Lake Morey is currently thriving. Following the successful 2024 alum treatment, phosphorus levels remain well below state thresholds. Our water quality is excellent, proving that current regulations and responsible wake sports can coexist with a healthy ecosystem.

Scientific Misalignment: The proposed rules overlook a growing body of research debunking the claim that wake surfing causes irreversible environmental damage when proper guidelines are followed. Lake Morey already meets all necessary operational criteria regarding size, depth, and setback requirements.

Success of Existing Rules: The 2024 wakeboat regulations are already working. A further ban would unjustly penalize law-abiding boaters and set a precedent of making policy based on perception rather than hard data.

Balanced Management: Instead of a blanket ban, the state should focus on enforcing existing regulations and expanding boater education. This approach maintains the balance between environmental stewardship and the diverse recreational use that defines our community.

I urge the Agency of Natural Resources to rely on the scientific evidence specific to Lake Morey and maintain the current management plan that has already proven successful.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the facts.

Patrick Byron
Fairlee, VT

I support the proposed changes due to my concerns about impacts on wildlife, shoreline erosion, and the safety and enjoyment of swimmers and non-motorized boaters.

- I would like to see the safety buffers increased to at least 500 feet.
- I support increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run).

While we can accommodate wakeboats in some suitable locations, they are generally a nuisance with high negative impact on others. Their use should be tightly limited to only the most appropriate areas.

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. Restricting wakesports to larger lakes makes a lot of sense.

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.

I support the proposed changes to Vermont’s Use of Public Waters rules. Because they have such adverse impacts on other users and on the environment, they should only be allowed on our largest lakes and there, only where there is 30 ft depth and a 700 ft setback from shorelines and other lake uses. Thanks.

I support the DEC’s changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

1. Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
2. Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE. We have worked SOO hard at Willoughby to clean our water. Let us not undo all the effort!

I am glad that the DEC made changes in response to the many concerns that have been raised about wake boating on our VT lakes. The danger to those of us who exclusively use hand-powered boats and paddleboards needed to be taken more seriously along with our valid concerns about erosion, invasive species and collateral damage to shoreline wildlife. Increasing the zone and expanding the safety buffers is the right move. However, the removal of the Home Rule is not the right move. Home Rule improves the odds of containing invasive species by restricting boat operation to one lake and diminishes my real concern that without Home Rule the remaining lakes where wakeboating is allowed will a target for wakeboat enthusiasts. We don't want our pristine, peaceful, beautiful Lake Willoughby to become the "go to" lake for these sports! We have welcomed day visitors for fishing, paddleboarding, kayaking, canoeing, and electric "hover boarding". We have had visitors wind-surfing and of course water skiing and tubing. I want to leave the lake to these sports and to the wildlife that coexists with these pursuits. KEEP HOME RULE and then you will have my full support.

My name is Coleman Miles, and I am a frequent visitor to Lake Morey from Covington, Louisiana through Boston College connections. I am writing to oppose the proposed 2026 restrictions on wake sports.

Public waters are held in trust for all citizens, and the right to use them is a fundamental recreational liberty. I believe any government restriction on these liberties must be backed by clear, site-specific evidence of harm. In the case of Lake Morey, that evidence simply does not exist:

No Environmental Justification: Lake Morey's water quality is excellent, with phosphorus levels well below state thresholds following the 2024 alum treatment. Restricting a specific group of users when the environment is demonstrably thriving is an overreach of regulatory authority.

The 2024 Rules are Working: Vermont already implemented strict wakeboat regulations in 2024. These rules already provide the necessary protections for shorelines and habitats. Moving the goalposts again just two years later—without data showing the 2024 rules failed—is arbitrary and unfair.

Civil Liberties & Public Trust: As a visitor who enjoys various water sports, I believe the state should protect the "Public Trust Doctrine," which ensures equal access to public resources. Banning a specific activity based on perception rather than environmental impact is a violation of the principle that public waters are for everyone, not just those with the loudest voices.

I urge the Agency to reject these new restrictions and continue with the 2024 management plan, which has already proven that recreation and conservation can coexist.

Sincerely,
Coleman Miles

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns raised about boater and swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion--specifically, (a) increasing the zone to 100 acres with a 3,000 foot run and (b) expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet. Our family has lived on Echo lake for nearly a century and neighbors have worked tirelessly—and successfully-- to keep Echo Lake clean, restful and attractive. Wake boats create enormous amounts of noise and general disruption to the lake and the species that live there and I can think of no argument for allowing them at all.

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the wakesports proposal. I am a born and raised Vermonter who owns property on one of our state's lakes. As such I care deeply about Vermont lakes and I support reasonable rules that protect water quality, shorelines, and safety. However, I urge you not to adopt the proposal as written and to revise it before implementation. The proposed thresholds — 100 acres, 3,000 feet, and 500 feet — would likely remove eligibility across many lakes through mapping. If the agency has Vermont measurements supporting these exact thresholds, please publish them clearly and explain why these numbers were chosen.

Enforcement is also a concern: a fixed 500-foot buffer and 3,000-foot run length raise questions about how they will be measured on the water and enforced consistently in real conditions. On AIS, prevention should focus on universal drain/clean/dry compliance and inspection programs that apply to everyone. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates.

It seems to that a small group is attempting to dictate what can and cannot happen on public waters within our state based on their own personal use preference. This is not how we do things in Vermont. We pride ourselves on our ability to get along with everyone here despite our differences. I urge you to keep the original changes from 2023 as they were an acceptable compromise for all involved.

Thank you.

Kristen Maher

I thank and appreciate the Department of Environmental Conservation for their current proposal to tighten the restrictions on wakesports in Vermont. As part of a family that has owned significant lakeshore property on Echo Lake in Orleans county for nearly 100 years, I do wish that the DEC had gone even further and prohibited wakesport activity altogether on lakes as small and pristine as Echo, where the calm, quiet enjoyment of the lake and its cleanliness cannot help but be deteriorated by the introduction of wake boats. That detriment would be in addition to the dangers posed by wakesports to the safety of children, swimmers, other boaters and loon nests, as well as the potential for causing invasive species spread and shoreline erosion.

That being said, though, I strongly support at least implementing the measures that have been proposed, which include increasing the minimum area of wakesport zones to 100 acres from 50 acres and (especially appreciated) prohibiting operation of wakesports within 500 feet of an individual in the water or another vessel.

In further support of total wakesport prohibition on our lake, I would add that just because a lake has the space and capacity to meet the wakesports zone requirements should not mean that the lake is necessarily one on which wakesports should be allowed. Some small lakes might have considerable boisterous and widespread recreational activity in progress on a continual basis into which the injection of wakesports could be a welcome addition. Echo has not been such a lake and has been valued for decades for its clean and quiet peacefulness. I would respectfully ask the DEC to help us keep it that way!

Dear ANR/DEC Committee,

I am writing in strong support of allowing wakesports on Lake Morey and respectfully urge the Committee to consider the full picture of both environmental stewardship and responsible recreation when evaluating this issue.

For generations, Lake Morey has been a cornerstone of our community in Fairlee. It is where neighbors connect, families create lifelong memories, and visitors experience the unique character of our region. On any given summer day, the lake supports swimmers, paddlers, anglers, sailors, and motorized boaters—peacefully coexisting on the same body of water. That diversity of recreation is not a flaw; it is part of what makes Lake Morey vibrant and inclusive. A blanket ban on wake boats or wake-surfing would disrupt that balance and unnecessarily limit access for families who responsibly participate in wakesports.

Importantly, the Vermont 2024 Wakeboat Rule already establishes rigorous, science-based safeguards. These include minimum lake size and depth requirements, shoreline setback distances, and operational standards designed specifically to protect water quality and shoreline integrity. These rules were developed through a deliberate, expert-informed process with input from environmental scientists, state officials, and community stakeholders across Vermont. Lake Morey meets the criteria outlined in these regulations. Creating additional lake-specific prohibitions would duplicate protections that are already in place and undermine the consistency of statewide policy.

Moreover, Lake Morey is not a waterbody in crisis. The alum treatment completed in 2024—alongside years of collaborative stewardship by residents, local organizations, and state partners—has significantly reduced phosphorus levels to well below state thresholds. This is a success story. It demonstrates that thoughtful environmental management, ongoing monitoring, and community engagement work. Restricting a single, regulated activity in the absence of evidence that it is causing measurable harm risks shifting the focus away from the broader, proven strategies that are sustaining the lake's health.

Responsible boaters who comply with state rules should not be unfairly penalized when clear regulations and enforcement mechanisms already exist. A more constructive approach would be continued education, outreach, and consistent enforcement of the current safeguards—ensuring that all lake users understand and follow the law. Collaboration, not prohibition, is what has preserved Lake Morey's environmental quality thus far.

As a resident of Fairlee and someone who has spent a lifetime enjoying and caring for Lake Morey, I care deeply about its future. I fully support strong environmental protections—but I also believe those protections can coexist with well-regulated recreational use. I respectfully ask the Committee to support policies that uphold both: protecting water quality while preserving equitable access for all who cherish this lake.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and for your continued leadership in safeguarding Vermont's natural resources.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- a. Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- b. Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. Please help us to keep our lake clean. We have worked so hard. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

We spend so much energy trying to keep our lakes clean and clear, the Home Rule only makes sense. More boats trying to use fewer lakes means more invasive plants and marine life moving between bodies of water.

Dear VT DEC: Wake sports are NOT an appropriate use of the Averill Lakes. The majority of the public has stated they do not want this recreation. Wake Sports craft and their wakes disturb the shorelines and are harmful to the Lake, Shores and Vermonters and the existing culture there.

The proposed changes do not go far enough to protect our natural resources! Protect the lakes that remain uncontaminated and peaceful with appropriate recreation for the benefit of this and future generations of both Human and Wildlife. Do your job! Be proud of your legacy. Carry out your mission to Protect our Inland Lakes as you so clearly state in your mission below.

"The Department of Environmental Conservation is responsible for protecting Vermont's natural resources and safeguarding human health for the benefit of this and future generations."

I am a homeowner in Barnet, Vermont, living within walking distance of Harvey Lake, and I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed DEC rule revisions and specifically to urge that Harvey Lake be included among the lakes exempt from wakesport activity.

I have lived near Harvey Lake for a few years now, and in that short time it has become a meaningful part of my life. On summer evenings I walk down to the water simply to be near it, to watch the loons glide across the surface and listen to them call, to catch sight of the eagles that nest along the shore. I have been out on the lake with friends in their pontoon boats, moving slowly, quietly, taking in everything around us. That unhurried, low-impact way of being on the water is not just how I enjoy the lake. It is the tradition of Harvey Lake, and it is worth protecting.

I have not yet seen a wakeboat operating on Harvey Lake in wakesport mode, and that is precisely why I am writing now. Prevention is the only real option. Once the damage is done to the loon nests, to the shoreline, to the sense of safety for kayakers and swimmers, it cannot easily be undone. Harvey Lake is narrow at both ends, home to a public beach and an active Fish & Wildlife boat access, and surrounded by swim and boat docks. There is no safe corridor for a wakeboat to run without creating dangerous conditions for everyone else on the water. The lake's shape and size make this not a matter of opinion but of physics.

I am also genuinely worried about aquatic invasive species. Harvey Lake's Greeter Station represents years of community commitment to keeping these waters clean. Wakeboats carry water in ballast tanks that do not fully drain, and each visit from a boat that has been on another lake is a potential introduction of invasive species that could alter this ecosystem permanently. The wildlife, the water quality, and the recreational economy that draws visitors to Barnet all depend on keeping that threat at bay.

I urge the DEC to adopt the proposed rule revisions in full, including the increase to a 100-acre minimum contiguous Wake Sports Safety Zone, and to include Harvey Lake among the exempt lakes. Its size, configuration, nesting wildlife, and the community that has cared for it make it an unsuitable environment for wakesports. Please act now, while there is still something to protect.

Thank you for considering my comment.

My name is Nick Kirwood, and I am a frequent visitor to Lake Morey from Boston. This new proposal is absolutely useless! I am writing to oppose the proposed 2026 restrictions on wake sports.

Public waters are held in trust for all citizens, and the right to use them is a fundamental recreational liberty. I believe any government restriction on these liberties must be backed by clear, site-specific evidence of harm. In the case of Lake Morey, that evidence simply does not exist:

No Environmental Justification : Lake Morey's water quality is excellent, with phosphorus levels well below state thresholds following the 2024 alum treatment. Restricting a specific group of users when the environment is demonstrably thriving is an overreach of regulatory authority.

The 2024 Rules are Working: Vermont already implemented strict wakeboat regulations in 2024. These rules already provide the necessary protections for shorelines and habitats. Moving the goalposts again just two years later—without data showing the 2024 rules failed—is arbitrary and unfair.

Civil Liberties & Public Trust:As a visitor who enjoys various water sports, I believe the state should protect the "Public Trust Doctrine," which ensures equal access to public resources. Banning a specific activity based on perception rather than environmental impact is a violation of the principle that public waters are for everyone, not just those with the loudest voices.

I urge the Agency to reject these new restrictions and continue with the 2024 management plan, which has already proven that recreation and conservation can coexist.

Please, Lake Morey is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Let's have some fun and enjoy it!

Sincerely,
Nick Kirwood

I am a resident of Richmond VT, but spend summers on Lake Morey. We have two docked wake boats on our lake that occasionally engage in wake sports but are always abiding by regulations and have not presented any issues. As I have stated before, the wake boats/sports regulations should be based on the size of the boat: a 26ft boat would not be appropriate for our lake, the current active boats are 21 ft. Many residents on our lake have been "fear mongered", they have been subjected to misinformation and thus have developed irrational fears about wake sports. On a survey conducted by our lake association, wake sports were not an issue for the vast majority of resident (7th on a list of 12 lake issues). I support a process for decontamination and believe the secretary should have powers to modify regulations as conditions change. I also feel that the present law is fair and adequate for Vermont - there were hours spent on hearings and developing rules that would be the "least restrictive" for all. I hope if the present rule is changed, it will be a fair response to all those affected. I don't agree with removing 9 lakes from allowing wake sports. I believe there are many other issues that the state could be addressing, for instance septic regulations, that are perhaps more important than wake sports.

I do appreciate all the work that DEC staff have devoted to this issue. Thank you.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted. I'm also concerned about AIS being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. AIS prevention is important, but the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you.

My name is Alexis Jetter. My family and I have lived in Thetford Center, VT, for 37 years, just down the road from Lake Fairlee. I think it makes sense to ban wakeboarding on Lake Fairlee and other modest-sized Vermont lakes.

Let me tell you why: My two children grew up on Treasure Island, the public beach on Lake Fairlee. They learned to swim there and taste the wonder of the natural world there. And like us: they feel so lucky. Entering the beach at Lake Fairlee is like walking back in time. (I call it the 1950s without McCarthy.) The towering pines, the clear water, loons, great blue herons, bald eagles, snapping turtles, osprey. It feels unchanged, unspoiled, a place time forgot.

Vermonters have stewarded Lake Fairlee with great care and love for generations. And that care has borne fruit: We've watched baby loons learn to swim and dive alongside their parents. Watched osprey soar and then nose-dive for fish. Watched, with amazement, as hundreds of tiny, just-born snapping turtles bring the sand at Treasure Island alive, squirming from their nests down to the water. We've kayaked at sunset and swum into the fall colors.

It's beautiful to watch people of all ages enjoy the lake: the kids pedal-boating, the teens water-skiing and sailing, families of anglers and solitary kayakers, the older woman who trawls the waters at day's end. We've all co-existed and enjoyed each other for decades.

I want to talk mostly about swimming, though. For years, our family and friends have swum together for long distances along the edge of the lake. And we've always felt safe, even when motorboats and pontoon boats come near. We wave to them – they slow down, wave back, and turn away.

We've always co-existed with powerboats, pretty peacefully and safely. Until now.

I want to be really clear:

As swimmers, we don't venture into the middle of the lake – or anywhere near it. We swim in groups, so that we can be seen. We never venture near any motorized boats.

And yet we are now fearful about swimming any distance from shore.

Wake boat owners at the last public hearing said that no one has ever registered a formal complaint with the state about wake boat violations.

That may be true. I never knew there WAS a place to lodge a complaint about the frightening waves we get hit by when wake boats are in the water with us.

For all I know, the wake boats on Lake Fairlee ARE observing the regulations. That doesn't stop their huge waves from hitting us like ocean swells – and again: we're not out in the middle of the lake. Not even close.

Let me tell you what it's like. The waves come fast, one after the other. We're strong swimmers – but it's really frightening when they hit us full force. We have to stop swimming, and face them head-on, either diving under the wave or jumping high to avoid getting thrown backwards. Even underwater, you can feel their force. Our children, when small, would not have been able to handle the waves.

So my question is: Why? Why endanger the safety of so many Vermonters who love this lake: the campers, the kayakers, the sailors and fishermen and women, the paddlers? Why endanger the health of the lake and the safety of the community that loves it? Our lake is just too small for wake sports to safely co-exist with other lake users.

Officials have said they're looking for quote unquote: “flexibility and nuance” to resolve this issue. I disagree.

There should be no “flexibility” or “nuance” when it comes to safety.

Let's keep our lake the treasure that it is – for all of us.

Thank you.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I oppose adopting the 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot run requirement, and 500-foot buffer without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. Aquatic invasive species prevention should be strengthened through consistent inspection and compliance requirements for all boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make only targeted, evidence-based updates

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted. I'm also concerned about AIS being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. AIS prevention is important, but the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted.

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Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed wakesports rule changes. I support safety, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water practices, but I urge you not to adopt the proposal as written. The thresholds — 100 acres, 3,000 feet, and 500 feet — appear to be designed to reduce eligibility through mapping. If these exact numbers are necessary, please show Vermont field data and explain why they were chosen. AIS prevention matters, but it should be addressed through statewide inspection, education, and enforcement for all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and make targeted, evidence-based updates.

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Lake Fairlee and Wake Boats –

I write in sadness and some anger that my statement and those of many others last year about why we do not wish to see Wake Boat use on Lake Fairlee do not seem to have convinced state authorities to finalize a ban. For many who live near or on Lake Fairlee, it is a precious resource that we enjoy year-round. We swim long distances in the summer, kayak in Spring and Fall, skate and ski in the winter. This has been true for some for half a century or more. For me, the lake has been a central part of my life for 35 years.

Swimmers, boaters, those who enjoy fishing, at least a thousand campers, loons, turtles, herons, ducks and fish share the lake without any trouble. The introduction of wake boats threatens that joyful coexistence. They will make swimmers, fishermen, sailboaters, campers, loons, herons and turtles less safe. Kids just learning to swim, elders like myself and friends who like to swim long distances in the summer, kayakers, fishing boats are all in danger from wake boats.

It is beyond my comprehension that a handful of people on the lake, some of whom are not even full time residents, who wish to use expensive toys – just because they have them -- seem to have greater influence over state policy than the needs and desires of the many who have peacefully worked together for decades to keep Lake Fairlee an unusually clean and pristine natural resource. A gem that I have described as one of my vital organs. Lungs that enable me to breathe more easily and freely. When I first moved here, there was an attempt to limit the number of motor boats on the lake. The state over-ruled us. That fight is long over and I am not attempting to re-litigate it except to note that the waters of the lake were far cleaner before the introduction of numerous motorboats. There was no milfoil problem at that time. As people began to bring in boats from afar, milfoil was introduced into the lake and has ever since been a costly and vexing problem to manage. There are consequences that stem from the introduction of new kinds of boats into the clean waters of Lake Fairlee. Please do not take them lightly. It is time to end this debate and ban wake boats from small pristine waterways such

as Lake Fairlee. Please, let us put this debate to rest and preserve one of the most precious places in our beautiful state.

We are lake front home owners on Lake Fairlee and would like to submit this public comment in strong support of the proposed update to Vermont's wakesports rule establishing a minimum 100-acre wakesports zone on the lake. We respectfully ask that the Department adopt the rule as written, without exception.

As home owners on the lake we care deeply about lake health, safety on the lake, and the long term sustainability of this community. Wake boats generate powerful waves that increase shoreline erosion, damage docks and property, and create safety risks for swimmers and other boaters.

Lake Fairlee has a wonderful community of people who use the lake for swimming, kayaking, fishing, sailing and being in nature. Families throughout the Upper Valley are able access to the lake via the boat ramp or while spending the day at Treasure Island. We are all able to co-exist and enjoy the lake for these activities simultaneously because these activities do not disrupt the surrounding area. Wake boats on the other hand are exclusionary and push other activities out due to the noise and large wakes they leave behind.

The summer camps on Lake Fairlee are a vital part of the local economy and identity. Parents who send their children to these camps expect the lake to be a safe environment for their children to learn how to swim, sail and canoe. If we allow the unsafe activities of a few disrupt this idilic setting, parents may hesitate to continue sending their children to camp.

We cannot trade the recreational indulgences of a few people, for the longterm health of Lake Fairlee, the economic well-being of the Upper Valley and safety of of families. We must adopt the rule

prohibiting wakesports boats on lakes with less than 100-acre wakesports zones, without exception, to preserve the safe, peaceful, and natural character of Lake Fairlee and similarly situated Vermont lakes.

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments and to urge the Agency to maintain the 2024 rule structure as originally written. In May 2024, the Agency stated that the existing framework was science-based and reflective of shared interests; the current proposals move beyond the scope of cited research without presenting Vermont-specific data to justify such a significant departure.

The proposed transition from a 50-acre to a 100-acre minimum lake size, as well as the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, appears to be based on geometric spatial modeling rather than documented ecological thresholds. Wake energy is governed by the physics of depth and distance from shore, variables that do not change simply because a lake crosses an arbitrary surface-area boundary. Without a study directly linking total acreage or linear travel distance to sediment disturbance or habitat loss, these requirements function as categorical exclusions and restrictions on access rather than data-supported safeguards.

Furthermore, the expansion to a 500-foot buffer from "any object" creates significant practical challenges. The primary scientific sources cited, such as research from the University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory, evaluate how wake energy attenuates relative to shorelines, not floating objects like buoys or swimmers. This 360-degree exclusion zone represents a policy expansion that lacks a defined scientific necessity and will be nearly impossible for boaters to accurately judge on open water.

I also strongly disagree with the classification of wakesports as a "non-normal use." Towed watersports behind inboard motorboats clearly predate 1993. The evolution of hull design and ballast technology does not transform a decades-old recreational category into a legally distinct "new" activity. The law was intended to prevent entirely novel uses, not to freeze marine technology at 1993 standards. Regarding administrative revisions in sections 3.7 and 4.3, I am concerned that shifting lake eligibility to administrative discretion allows for incremental access removal without formal rulemaking. Any temporary suspension must be limited to a single boating season, supported by documented scientific necessity, and subject to a transparent public process to prevent temporary measures from becoming indefinite prohibitions.

Finally, the State has an obligation to implement and educate before it restricts. The 2024 rules have had limited time to be socialized within the boating community. Regulatory expansion without proper integration into Vermont boater education and enforcement training undermines compliance and public trust.

I respectfully request that the Agency uphold the 2024 standards, focus on consistent education and enforcement, and ensure that any future adjustments remain grounded in objective, verifiable data rather than subjective petitions.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

Dear ANR, Lakes & Ponds, and DEC Representatives,

As a lifelong boater and someone who deeply values Vermont's outdoors, I care strongly about both environmental stewardship and fair access to our public waters. I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments to the wakesports rules.

Several of the proposed numeric standards extend beyond what has been demonstrated through Vermont-specific scientific findings.

The 3,000-foot straight run requirement is based on operational assumptions rather than an identified ecological threshold.

The increase to a 100-acre minimum is a geometric standard, not an environmental variable tied to wake formation or sediment impact.

Expanding the buffer to 500 feet from "any object" transforms a shoreline-based protection concept into a broad exclusion zone that would make lawful operation nearly impossible on many waters.

While I have concerns with each of these changes, my strongest objection is to Section 3.7.

As written, Section 3.7 allows a lake to be removed from wakesports eligibility for management or research purposes without a defined duration, without automatic reinstatement, and without a required formal rulemaking review. There is no built-in timeline and no guaranteed path back.

This structure creates open-ended authority to suspend lawful recreational use. Without clear limits, what is described as a temporary management tool functions as an indefinite access suspension mechanism rather than a research process.

Temporary environmental protections should be clearly temporary. They should include defined time limits, written scientific findings, and automatic reinstatement once the project concludes.

Without those safeguards, Section 3.7 shifts lake access from stable rule criteria to open-ended administrative discretion.

Vermont's public waters are held in trust for balanced use. Lawful recreation should not be subject to indefinite suspension through administrative process without clear procedural guardrails.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments and urge the Agency to revise Section 3.7 to include defined limits and reinstatement protections, and to reconsider the proposal entirely.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Cameron Fisher

Recreational Boater

I strongly urge an end to wakesports on Lake Fairlee, for the safety of those engaged in non-intrusive uses like swimming, kayaking, and paddle-boarding. The lake isn't big enough for even regulation-abiding, considerate motorized uses; of all the potential forms of recreation on Lake Fairlee, only high-speed wakesports create hazards for all other users. Sooner or later, a swimmer or canoer is going to get hurt, and it is likely to be a child or an older person, those for whom the lake is an especially precious opportunity for safe, peaceful recreation.

I'm writing to add my voice to those strongly encouraging more restrictive use of wake boats. There is a myriad of well-documented, rock-solid reasons for greater restrictions, both scientific and social. I won't repeat them here but instead offer a different angle.

Wake boats can be seen as yet another example of technology outpacing society's reaction time to judge what is good and reasonable for most people and for the environment.

Let's take advantage of the opportunity to react appropriately and restrict this destructive technology (and the very few people who use it) to only the largest lakes and deepest waters, where the impacts to everyone else, and ecosystems, are minimal. To me, the reasonable conclusion is to restrict this activity to lakes Champlain and Memphremagog. Short of this, I support the strictest rules possible on shoreline buffers and deference to other lake users.

I do not support the elimination of the Home Lake Rule, as I believe it is the most effective protection against the transfer of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in ballast water. I also oppose the proposed decontamination standards because: 1. The proposed 14-day quarantine period is insufficient, I believe science supports a 30-day period. 2. Decontamination facilities currently only exist on Lake Champlain, and the state lacks the funding or a plan to provide additional locations. I recommend that all wakeboard be required to register a home lake and not be permitted to move to other water bodies during the calendar year.

I support the new DEC rules involving wake sports in VT. My local lake is Lake Iroquois which is partially in Williston where I live. I consider Lake Iroquois too small for wake sports. A large wake can easily tip the canoe I paddle. Increasing the minimum safety buffer to 500 feet from structures and other users and an increase of the wake sports zone from 50 to 100 acres will ensure that wake sports will not be allowed on small lakes such as Lake Iroquois.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted. I'm also concerned about AIS being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. AIS prevention is important, but the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you.

Vermont is already an aging community, who's going to pay the over priced taxes after everyone either moves away or dies?

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My name is Colin Hanna, and I am a frequent visitor to Lake Morey from Idaho, where I also actively participate in wake sports and do so while still respecting the environment. I am writing to oppose the proposed 2026 restrictions on wake sports.

Public waters are held in trust for all citizens, and the right to use them is a fundamental recreational liberty. I believe any government restriction on these liberties must be backed by clear, site-specific evidence of harm. In the case of Lake Morey, that evidence simply does not exist:

No Environmental Justification: Lake Morey's water quality is excellent, with phosphorus levels well below state thresholds following the 2024 alum treatment. Restricting a specific group of users when the environment is demonstrably thriving is an overreach of regulatory authority.

The 2024 Rules are Working: Vermont already implemented strict wakeboat regulations in 2024. These rules already provide the necessary protections for shorelines and habitats. Moving the goalposts again just two years later—without data showing the 2024 rules failed—is arbitrary and unfair.

Civil Liberties & Public Trust: As a visitor who enjoys various water sports, I believe the state should protect the "Public Trust Doctrine," which ensures equal access to public resources. Banning a specific activity based on perception rather than environmental impact is a violation of the principle that public waters are for everyone, not just those with the loudest voices.

I urge the Agency to reject these new restrictions and continue with the 2024 management plan, which has already proven that recreation and conservation can coexist.

Sincerely,
Colin Hanna

We are property owners on Lake Fairlee. We use the lake daily in the summer, swimming, kayaking and paddleboarding. We strongly support the proposed rule changes as written without any compromises to special interests. We are especially concerned about our grandchildren who love to kayak and paddle board on the lake. A wake boat could easily swamp them or even us as we kayak or paddle board. This is a great concern to us. The 500' distance is definitely necessary for the safety of all of us who use the lake.

My name is William Camp, and I am a frequent visitor to Lake Morey from South Burlington. I am writing to oppose the proposed 2026 restrictions on wake sports.

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I urge the Agency to reject these new restrictions and continue with the 2024 management plan, which has already proven that recreation and conservation can coexist.

Sincerely,

William Camp

We need to protect Lake Fairlee from wakesports. The loons and bald eagles and turtles and fish will thank us, as will the many children who swim at the lake every summer. The lake is too small for wakesports.

My name is Luke Dwyer and I am a frequent visitor to Lake Morey from the Cape. I am writing to oppose the proposed 2026 restrictions on wake sports. Although I live on the Cape now, I am Upper Valley through and through. I grew up right across the river in Lyme, NH. I spent much time visiting lakes in Vermont for water sports and wakeboarding.

Public waters are held in trust for all citizens, and the right to use them is a fundamental recreational liberty. I believe any government restriction on these liberties must be backed by clear, site-specific evidence of harm. In the case of Lake Morey, that evidence simply does not exist:

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I urge the Agency to reject these new restrictions and continue with the 2024 management plan, which has already proven that recreation and conservation can coexist.

Sincerely,
Luke H Dwyer

Hi, my name is Ryan McPhee, I am 19 years old and have been wakesurfing in Vermont for the past 11 years. I grew up on the boat, learning to maneuver it safely, follow the rules of the water, and respect the boats around me. I spend hours a week on the lake every summer and have not seen any incidents involving wake surf boats that would justify pushing the new 500-foot safety proposal. The agency summarizes the proposed 2026 changes to improve safety and reduce conflict. The 2024 rule has been in effect for only one boating season, and there have been no statewide reports on wakeboat enforcement violations presented to the public. Safety-based regulations usually follow documented incident data, yet no Vermont statistics have been provided showing any incidents involving injury or shoreline damage under the current 2024 rule. While I did not like the 2024 rule, we accepted it and followed it. What enforcement or incident data shows that the existing rule is inadequate? Policy should respond to documented incidents and facts, not the emotions and assumptions. I believe that the new proposal will cause more harm than good, wake boats travel slow, but having to stop if someone enters the 500 foot safety zone it could cause harm to the surfer or wake boarder behind the boat. I strongly oppose these new rule changes.

I do not believe wake boats have a place on Lake Harvey. I believe that level of wave and noise and possible danger damages not only the natural wonder of the lake, but also the reason people love the lake as a beautiful and serene place to swim, or simply enjoy the water.

For generations Lake Harvey has been a serene and pristine part of Vermont's countryside. A place where one finds calm and tranquility away from the noisy and hectic cities. Not only would wake boats cause environmental harm, but they also degrade the personal connection to nature and the much needed calm and relaxation that provides.

We would like to increase the minimum zone to 100 acres with a 3,000 foot run and expand safety buffers from 200 to 500 feet from other users. We had a wave come over the floor of our pontoon boat twice so in our opinion there are serious safety issues. We are also in favor of a home lake rule.

I am writing to express my concerns about wake sports across all Vermont lakes, regardless of size. My concerns are multi-faceted, but largely stem from areas of safety and environmental impacts.

Having seen swimmers without a boat or buoy marker nearby or swimming in deeper waters, I have had concerns for some time about distracted boaters in general and concerns about safety for all. Watching children and new boaters take to the water to learn how to enjoy it in many forms – whether without equipment, by self-propulsion, at the whim of the wind, or with a motorized vessel -- I recognize that they are learning a new skill as well as gauging how stable or unstable those activities and their watercraft might be in addition to how passive or powerful. Not all who enjoy Vermont lakes can be considered seasoned swimmers or boaters. Each one of us had to start somewhere, and a feeling of safety is instrumental in a beginner or novice feeling comfortable enough to want to enjoy the water throughout their lifetime. People of various water-skill levels have already expressed concern that larger wakes and waves have created further concerns about potential capsizing, swamping, and bodily injury to new and even highly experienced users of our lakes as they navigate the waters as a swimmer or in command of far less powerful craft on the water.

Furthermore, many Vermont lakes are already dealing with the disheartening repercussions of inadvertent introduction of invasive species from years past. Attempts at eradication are far more costly and time consuming than the short-lived events that introduce the invasive species. Wake sports have the potential to introduce new, additional, and even more destructive species regardless of the efforts of our dedicated lake boat greeters. The proposed removal of the “home lake” rule is a further insult to the health of our Vermont waters. Lake greeters can’t be there around the clock and they only have the ability to inspect the boat’s exterior features. A wake boat’s ballasts, when filled and later discharged in association with wake sports, could very well be the Trojan Horse that brings more unwanted and uninvited visitors of a harmful nature to Vermont’s lakes. Those temporarily visiting Vermont lakes to participate in wake sports will most likely be here and gone in a short period of time leaving destruction in their wake without bearing the responsibility or burden of healing the scars they may leave – to the lake and the enjoyment of others.

While waves from boats dissipate as they near the shore, water does not recognize a “distance from shore” boundary nor do lakes have breakwaters to protect the shoreline. Purposefully creating waves of increasing amplitude and force, regardless of how far away from shore they may be generated, does not mean that their impact and disruption to the shoreline is neutralized. With the rains in recent years impacting the State of Vermont and causing damage to the natural landscape and personal property, we have seen that water does not recognize boundaries the higher and more forceful it becomes. It has the power to destroy and we need to respect that natural strength.

I live about 15 miles from the ocean, but rarely go there. The ocean is magnificent and awe-inspiring in its own way, but I choose to return time and time again to a Vermont lake that I am fortunate enough to have considered a treasured friend for my entire life -- Willoughby. A friend that generations of my family and friends have shared with each other. A friend whom I’m moved to protect.

Responsible boating is a commitment for us all. Bigger is not always better and oftentimes, less is more. As stewards of Vermont lakes, I believe we all have an obligation to preserve and maintain the natural beauty and tranquility, as best we can, of these precious treasures and the natural environment for future generations and visitors of all ages.

Alison M. Zweil

Property Owner: Willoughby Lake

Hello-

I wanted to write to ensure my comments were placed as part of the record as I oppose any changes to existing rules associated with enhanced wake operations.

Specifically, I oppose the following:

- 3,000-Foot Straight Run Requirement
 - o There is no scientific or environmental research establishing 3,000 feet as necessary for environmental protection. This figure reflects typical ride patterns and geometry, not hydrodynamic or shoreline impact data.
- Oppose the 500-Foot Buffer from “Any Object” in a Wake Zone
 - o Wake studies focus on shoreline wave attenuation — not 360° “object exclusion” zones. Vermont already operates under a 200-foot safety framework. This proposal creates a moving exclusion bubble that makes lawful operation extremely difficult and impractical.
- Oppose the 100-Acre Minimum Lake Size (VEHEMENT OPPOSITION)
 - o Lake acreage is a mathematical measurement, not an indicator of environmental response. Wake energy and wave behavior do not change simply because a lake exceeds a certain surface size. This threshold functions as a policy tool to eliminate lakes by definition, not science.
- Oppose Labeling Watersports as a “Non-Normal Use” (VEHEMENT OPPOSITION)
 - o Towed watersports using inboard boats clearly predate 1993. The evolution of boat technology does not make the activity itself a “new” use. Wakesurfing represents a modern evolution of long-standing recreational boating practices.
- Oppose Section 3.7 – Lake Management / Research Provision
 - o This section creates a pathway where an already-approved lake could be restricted under a “management” or “research” designation without a clearly defined reinstatement timeline.
 - o Without clear criteria, study parameters, and a set reinstatement schedule, this functions as an indefinite access suspension mechanism rather than a transparent research process.
- Vermont Boater Education – Regulatory Implementation & Accountability Concern
 - o Before adding additional restrictions, the State must ensure existing rules are fully implemented, communicated, and incorporated into official boater education and enforcement training. Regulatory expansion without proper education undermines compliance, fairness, and public trust.

Regards,

Timothy McLaughlin

I oppose all of the proposed changes, however the following items I find particular objectionable:
I oppose the 100-Acre Minimum Lake Size, as lake acreage is a mathematical measurement, not an indicator of environmental response. Wake energy and wave behavior do not change simply because a lake exceeds a certain surface size. This threshold functions as a policy tool to eliminate lakes by definition, not science.

I oppose Labeling Watersports as a “Non-Normal Use”, as towed watersports using inboard boats clearly predate 1993. The evolution of boat technology does not make the activity itself a “new” use. Wakesurfing represents a modern evolution of long-standing recreational boating practices.

Thank you-

-Timothy McLaughlin

I wanted to write to ensure my comments were placed as part of the record as I oppose any changes to existing rules associated with enhanced wake operations.

Specifically, I oppose the following:

- Oppose the 3,000-Foot Straight Run Requirement
 - o There is no scientific or environmental research establishing 3,000 feet as necessary for environmental protection. This figure reflects typical ride patterns and geometry, not hydrodynamic or shoreline impact data.
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 - o Without clear criteria, study parameters, and a set reinstatement schedule, this functions as an indefinite access suspension mechanism rather than a transparent research process.
- Vermont Boater Education – Regulatory Implementation & Accountability Concern
 - o Before adding additional restrictions, the State must ensure existing rules are fully implemented, communicated, and incorporated into official boater education and enforcement training. Regulatory expansion without proper education undermines compliance, fairness, and public trust.

The following two items are particularly objectionable and are vehemently opposed:

- Oppose the 100-Acre Minimum Lake Size
 - o Lake acreage is a mathematical measurement, not an indicator of environmental response. Wake energy and wave behavior do not change simply because a lake exceeds a certain surface size. This threshold functions as a policy tool to eliminate lakes by definition, not science.
- Oppose Labeling Watersports as a “Non-Normal Use”
 - o Towed watersports using inboard boats clearly predate 1993. The evolution of boat technology does not make the activity itself a “new” use. Wakesurfing represents a modern evolution of long-standing recreational boating practices.

Regards,

Joseph Robbins

To whom it may concern

Once the pristine lakes of the NEK are compromised they will NEVER come back. This is foremost in my mind as the reason your regulations should prohibit any boat with hidden water reserves be banned from clean lakes until the SCIENCE proves it safe from spread of invasives. Ballasts and live wells are the main sources. Do not let the wakeboat manufacturers spread propaganda otherwise. Require the manufacturers to install the decontamination facilities at all lakes they wish to be open to such equipment.

This is your stated mission . This is for ALL the taxpayers in the state of Vermont.

Respectfully

Myles Danaher

Brattleboro/Westmore Vermont

I request that the DEC adopt the proposed rule revisions in full, including the increase to a 100-acre minimum contiguous Wake Sports Safety Zone, and include Harvey Lake among the exempt lakes. My husband and I live as year-round residents within walking distance of Harvey Lake. It has been a relief and joy to see the public beach re-open after the damage it sustained during the 2024 floods. The long recovery effort drove home the importance of protecting this beautiful community resource in every way we can. Wakesports threaten the lake's ecological stability. Unfortunately, our community has plenty of potentially damaging, expensive climate-related events to anticipate outside of our control without inviting in more damage. Opening Harvey Lake to wakesports is not financially responsible, and it will contribute to degradation of an important community resource.

I submit this comment in opposition to the proposed wakesports rule changes. I personally am a scientist, Biologist, and ecologist, and recreate in Vermont on Lakes in the North East Kingdom along with lakes in the southern portion of Vermont. I Personally do not have a wakeboat, however I have never had an issue with sharing the waters equally with all types of boats, especially wakeboats on the Vermont lakes.

I am submitting firm opposition to several elements of the proposed rule.

First, the 100-acre minimum lacks scientific justification. Wake energy and sediment interaction are not determined solely by lake surface area.

Second, the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement is unsupported by peer-reviewed environmental research and appears based on ride preference rather than measurable impact.

Third, the proposed 500-foot buffer from any object misapplies wake science, which evaluates shoreline interaction — not a mobile 360° exclusion bubble. Vermont's existing 200-foot framework already provides a safety standard.

Finally, Section 3.7 raises significant concern. It enables repeated management designations that could function as a de facto permanent ban without clear criteria or reinstatement timing. Any such provision should be narrowly limited and time-bound.

State agencies charged with managing public waters must rely on the highest level of scientific credibility when adopting numeric operational limits. In environmental regulation, peer review is essential because it ensures research has been independently validated, methods are reproducible, and conclusions withstand scrutiny beyond the original authors.

The primary research cited in support of expanded restrictions — the University of Minnesota St. Anthony Falls Laboratory work (Marr et al., 2022) — is not peer-reviewed literature. While informative, it does not carry the same evidentiary weight required for statewide regulatory thresholds.

In contrast, peer-reviewed studies including:

- Girod & Goudey (2015)
- MacFarlane (2025)
- Daeger et al.

Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft
Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings

<https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>

Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015) Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com
MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025)
MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>

These peer reviewed mentioned above , do not demonstrate that the proposed 100-acre minimum, 3,000-foot run length, or 500-foot “any object” buffer is scientifically necessary.

Importantly, the Marr study evaluates wake attenuation physics, not lake surface area thresholds or universal operational exclusion zones. The petition record itself primarily reflects precautionary concern and user conflict rather than quantitative hydrodynamic evidence.

When regulatory numbers appear to arise from geometric modeling or advocacy preference rather than peer-reviewed ecological thresholds, public confidence in science-based governance is weakened.

I respectfully request that ANR deny the proposed 2025 numeric rule expansions unless and until Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed scientific evidence demonstrates that such changes are environmentally necessary. As a scientist and ecologist, I believe it is essential that rulemaking decisions be grounded in verified, transparent science to maintain public trust and ensure sound environmental policy.

Thank you for your time,
Danielle Budlong
Lifetime Vermonter, Lake Seymour, Lake Hortonia, Lake St Catherine , Glen Lake

As a resident of Post Mills VT, I am strongly opposed to wake sports on Lake Fairlee. Our community should not have to compromise on this issue. My husband, myself and our two children spend most of our summer at the lake and enjoy the wildlife and peaceful atmosphere provided by lake fairlee. It would be devastating to lose that.

I oppose the proposed amendments because the hydrodynamic record does not support the new numeric thresholds.

The 3,000-foot straight run is not supported by scientific literature. It reflects ride geometry rather than environmental necessity.

The 500-foot “any object” setback improperly expands shoreline research into a moving exclusion zone that is not supported by wake attenuation studies.

The 100-acre threshold is a policy filter, not an environmental metric; wake energy does not inherently scale with surface acreage.

Wake physics is governed primarily by vessel displacement, speed, water depth, and distance from shore — not total lake acreage. Marr et al. (SAFL, 2022) measured wake height and energy attenuation with distance but did not identify lake surface area as an environmental control variable. (this is also not a peer reviewed document and should not have been considered for advancing this rule).

Peer-reviewed literature reinforces this point (see references at the end)

- Girod & Goudey (2015)
- MacFarlane (2025)
- Daeger et al.

None establish a 100-acre ecological threshold, nor do they identify a 3,000-foot run as environmentally determinative or necessary to complete a wakesport run, along with needing to be 500 from any an all objects while performing that run.

Peer review matters in this context because regulatory thresholds must be based on independently validated causal relationships. Non-peer-reviewed technical reports, such as the SAFL work, may inform discussion but should not alone justify statewide restrictions.

The current proposal appears to translate operational geometry into environmental policy without the necessary peer-reviewed scientific linkage.

Lastly – I oppose Section 3.7 creates an indefinite restriction mechanism without a defined path to reinstatement. This provision should be significantly constrained, including limiting management reviews to once every five years.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose the rule as proposed and ask that you personally research the peer reviewed research below, to show that these measures to not warranty this 2025 rule change proposal.

MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025)

MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>

Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015) Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft
Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings

<https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Various-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>

Respectfully,
Paul Budlong
Hydeville, Vermont

Recreational safety for others on the water and shoreline erosion. I am an open water swimmer and have been personally impacted.

I support the DEC's changes in response to my concerns about the following: boater and swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. Specifically increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run) and expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

My family has been coming to our camp on the lake for three generations now. I have swum and fished and sailed and boated on Willoughby lake for over sixty- four years. One of my great pleasures is the clarity of the water which would be greatly put at risk should wakesurfing be allowed as those waves greatly damage the environment of the lake.

I swim the lake every day in any weather, when I am there and in recent years I have been dismayed by the increasing speed of boats, their number and the new dangers they pose to me and my family who swim the edge of the lake.

Last summer, even though I drag an orange balloon now for safety, a high speed boat came into our cove way too fast and I had to swim fast toward the shore to get out of their way. Increasingly our enjoyment of the lake is ruined by the roar of high speed boats which we can hear clearly at our cabin. We don't come to the lake to feel like we are by the side of a highway! We also notice that when the high speed boats are out, the wildlife we love to observe -- the loons the mergansers, the eagles, the osprey take refuge.

My family and I also value the fishing and wildlife at Willoughby. More boats coming in bringing disruption and also the pollution of invasive species from other lake, will be devastating to the lake's wildlife.

The clean clear water of Willoughby is a bio diversity hotspot that we need to protect not exploit for short term gain and allow it to be disrupted by wake surfing and other high speed boats. There are many lakes in VT and NH where people who wish to use high speed boats and go wake surfing can enjoy their sport. There is only one Willoughby lake and it is a gem.

Willoughby lake is one of the last clear clean water lakes in the state that has such clear, clean water and such a relatively undamaged environment.

We value a quiet lake where everyone can enjoy it WITHOUT DESTROYING THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS. The loons, the eagles, the osprey and the fish depend upon a clean clear lake free of high speed boat disruptions. We also depend upon this. Please recognize that we have a right to enjoy our lake as well. Our activities on the lake -- swimming, boating without high speed motors, wildlife watching, hiking -- don't limit the way others experience the lake, but high speed boats bring noise and danger and LIMIT THE USE OF THE LAKE BY OTHERS.

Hello,

I am writing as a young student who has been learning about how government decisions are processed and made. In school, my teachers tell us that science, facts, and good communication and education matter.

We do have 2 boats in our family, however they are a pontoon boat and a regular ski boat. We love to do all kinds of watersports during the summer, including wakeboarding and surfing our friends boats. I recently took the boating safety course in 2025, however I realized this spring after listening in the online meetings for this rule, that there was nothing noted or learned about these wakeboat rules when I took my class, and that we have to be 500 from shore when doing watersports. I recently learned more about this information during the hearings online this month.

My parents and I have watched the wakesports hearings together so I could see how the process works in real life. I appreciate the opportunity to learn, but I am concerned that the proposed changes — especially the 3,000-foot run, the 500-foot rule, and the 100-acre requirement — do not seem clearly supported by science and seem to come from .

I respectfully oppose these changes and think the current rules and laws that are in place are safe, scientific, and allow all boaters to use the water together, without the need for these changes.

I hope the decision makers will make sure all sides are heard and that the final rules are based on solid evidence.

Thank you for your time.

Eva Budlong

Being a full time resident on Echo Lake for the past 27 years, I support motor sports on the lake. However I don't support wake boats on Echo lake. This is mostly because of the environmental impact that could happen over time. Echo lake has had great success with loons nesting and having baby chicks for the past several years. Echo lake has also prevented the introduction of aquatic invasive species, mostly because of the successful monitoring program of the access greeters.

Introducing wake boats on the lake would jeopardize the loon nesting & reproduction. While the proposed rule of 300' is appreciated, enforcing the rule would be a challenge. Erosion of the shore line over time is also a concern. Vermont's Shoreline Protection Act was implemented to limit the building of structures within 100' of the shoreline. There should be a limit of potential damage from the waterside of the shore as well.

The potential for introduction of invasive species due to residual lake water remaining in the ballast is the danger that I oppose the most. We have spent years, volunteer hours, paid hours and much training for many of us who enjoy the pristine lake to keep Echo clear of invasive species. Just one boat could mitigate all of that effort.

I also believe we are not preventing the sport from happening - these boats can go to much larger lakes in the area that are better suited for the sport.

I respectfully oppose the proposed rule changes.

My comments reflect strong opposition to multiple provisions that lack scientific grounding.

The proposed 500-foot buffer from any object is not supported by wake science, which focuses on shoreline attenuation. Creating a mobile exclusion zone exceeds the scope of the research and conflicts with Vermont's existing 200-foot safety rule.

The 3,000-foot straight-run requirement similarly lacks peer-reviewed justification and appears based on operational geometry rather than environmental impact.

I also oppose the 100-acre minimum, as lake size alone does not determine wake energy effects. The assertion that wakesports constitute "non-normal use" is inconsistent with the long history of inboard towed watersports.

Most concerning, Section 3.7 establishes an open-ended mechanism to restrict lakes under the guise of management or research without a clear reinstatement process. Any such authority must be narrowly limited and time-bounded.

The petition record and supporting materials acknowledge concerns about wildlife, safety perceptions, and lake character. However, the record lacks Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed hydrodynamic or sediment transport research demonstrating that the proposed numeric thresholds are required or necessary to change from the current 2024 rule that is in place.

The Agency has relied in part on the University of Minnesota SAFL wake study (Marr et al., 2022), which is NOT peer reviewed.

Peer review is critical because it subjects research to independent expert critique, helping prevent policy decisions based on incomplete or unverified findings.

Peer-reviewed studies — including Girod & Goudey (2015), MacFarlane (2025), and Daeger et al. — do not support the specific numeric standards now proposed, however do support the 2024 rule that is in place. (and I hope that you take the time to review these peer reviewed scientific reports

Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015) Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. ,
MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>,
Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment <https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>

Absent Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed evidence showing ecological necessity, expanding statewide restrictions risks moving ahead of the science.

I respectfully request reconsideration and that the 2024 rule stay in place regarding the acreage, the 500ft from shore only, and the 2024 wakezone stays are written.

Thank you
Paulene Thoms

ANR and those reviewing these comments,

I oppose the proposed wakesports amendments based on evidentiary concerns.

I am formally opposed to the proposed rule for the following reasons:

- No peer-reviewed science establishes the need for a 3,000-foot straight run.
- Wake studies do not support a 500-foot buffer from any object; they evaluate shoreline attenuation, and Vermont already enforces a 200-foot safety distance.
- The 100-acre requirement is not an environmental metric and does not reflect wake physics.

Along with the remaining other concerns I have found reading the literature and documents,

- I oppose the change of a wakeboat to non-normal use, The “non-normal use” claim disregards the longstanding history of inboard towed watersports prior to 1993.
- I am highly concerned about Section 3.7 as this creates a potentially permanent restriction pathway without defined limits or reinstatement criteria; at minimum, reviews should be capped at one per five-year period.

For these reasons, the proposal should be reconsidered.

I personally work for the State of New York in the public trust sector, and Environmental rulemaking should rely primarily on peer-reviewed science because peer review provides independent validation, reduces bias, and ensures methodological rigor. This is especially important when numeric operational limits are being imposed statewide.

The St. Anthony Falls Laboratory wake work (Marr et al., 2022) cited in Agency materials is not peer-reviewed journal literature. While informative, it does not carry the same level of scientific reliability required for regulatory thresholds. (University of Minnesota — St. Anthony Falls Laboratory Research on wake wave characteristics, energy, and attenuation relative to distance and depth <https://cse.umn.edu/safl/news/umn-researchers-study-waves-created-recreational-boats> Marr et al., Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves (2022) Wave height, energy, and attenuation study https://coalitionnavigation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/BoatGeneratedWakeWaveReport_Feb12022_Final.pdf)

Meanwhile, peer-reviewed studies (Girod & Goudey; MacFarlane; Daeger) do not demonstrate that these expanded rules are necessary or scientifically backed:

- 100 acres is an ecological breakpoint
- 3,000 feet is environmentally required or necessary for a wakeboat run or mode
- 500 feet from all objects is scientifically necessary and safety necessary

(Daeger et al., <https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>, Goudey & Girod https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf, MacFarlane <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>)

The petition record itself reflects precautionary advocacy more than quantitative environmental Vermont findings.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose adoption of the proposed numeric expansions.

Thank you,
Cathy Morlock

I respectfully oppose the proposed changes while strongly supporting responsible lake stewardship.
I respectfully but firmly oppose the proposed changes.

The non-normal use designation that is being requested is unsupported by historical fact. Towed watersports using inboard vessels have been part of Vermont waters for decades.

Section 3.7 introduces an open-ended mechanism that could repeatedly restrict lakes without a clear path to reinstatement. This authority should be narrowly constrained and time-limited as this is a loop hole to allow lakes to “ban” the use indefinitely.

The 100-acre minimum is similarly unsupported by environmental science; wake energy does not change simply due to surface acreage.

The proposed 500-foot “any object” setback misinterprets wake research and creates an impractical moving exclusion zone beyond Vermont’s existing 200-foot rule.

The 3,000-foot straight-run requirement lacks peer-reviewed backing and appears derived from ride patterns rather than environmental need.

Good environmental policy depends on science, and in the public sector, specifically peer-reviewed science. Peer review ensures that research conclusions have been independently evaluated and that regulatory decisions rest on verified evidence rather than preliminary technical findings.

The SAFL wake research frequently cited (Marr et al., 2022) is not peer-reviewed. This is the scientific information the the ANR team presented during the prerule making presentations for the roll out of the 2025 rule changes, which was provided to the ANR team from the petitioners Vermont Lakes for Responsible Wakes.

By comparison, peer-reviewed work by Girod & Goudey, MacFarlane, and Daeger does exist, and should be considered heavily, as these 3 PEER REVIEWED reports do NOT support the specific numeric thresholds now proposed.

The current record suggests the new standards are precautionary policy choices rather than scientifically demonstrated necessities.

I encourage the Agency to continue monitoring, data collection, and Vermont-specific research before expanding statewide restrictions AND LEAVE the 2024 rule regarding the wakesport zone size and layouts, the 500 from shore, and the 20 acre rule in place.

I also request that closer detail be looked at the request for the definition of a wakeboat to non normal use, along with serious reverbage of section 3.7.

Thank you and Respectfully,
John Wasilewski
Shrewsbury, Vermont

PEER REVIEWED RESEARCH

Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft
Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings

<https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Various-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>

Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015) Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025)

MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>

NON PEER REVIEWED RESEARCH

University of Minnesota — St. Anthony Falls Laboratory

Research on wake wave characteristics, energy, and attenuation relative to distance and depth

<https://cse.umn.edu/safl/news/umn-researchers-study-waves-created-recreational-boats>

Marr et al., Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves (2022)

Wave height, energy, and attenuation study https://coalitionnavigation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/BoatGeneratedWakeWaveReport_Feb12022_Final.pdf

Lake Waramaug Task Force — Shallow Water Environment Wave Impact Study (2024)

Wave energy propagation and shoreline distance findings

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852df852e69cfa768783fd0/t/6791117b64c0e95b7061fb1b/1737560444987/LWTaskForce%2BShallow%2BWa>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852df852e69cfa768783fd0/t/6791117b64c0e95b7061fb1b/1737560444987/LWTaskForce%2BShallow%2BWa>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852df852e69cfa768783fd0/t/6791117b64c0e95b7061fb1b/1737560444987/LWTaskForce%2BShallow%2BWa>

Dear ANR Team,

I oppose the proposed rule changes because the scientific burden of proof for new statewide numeric limits has not been met.

After reviewing the proposal, I must oppose several provisions that are not scientifically supported, which is what the 2024 rule making own ANR team noted on May 1, 2024 "the ANR's own public comment" stated: "The wakeboat rule – developed with significant input from the Vermont public – is science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation."

The 3,000-foot straight-run standard is not established in peer-reviewed literature.

The 100-acre lake minimum functions as a definitional exclusion rather than an environmental safeguard.

The 500-foot buffer from any object extends shoreline research beyond its intended scope and conflicts with Vermont's existing 200-foot safety framework.

Peer review is fundamental in regulatory science because it verifies that conclusions are reproducible, statistically sound, and independently vetted. The SAFL/Marr wake report cited in rule discussions has not undergone formal peer review and therefore should be considered preliminary.

Peer-reviewed studies — Girod & Goudey (2015), MacFarlane (2025), and Daeger et al. — do not establish the necessity of the proposed acreage, run length, or universal object buffer.

Therefore these PEER reviewed published research contradict this exact extension of the rules and contradict the ANR's own public comment of The wakeboat rule – developed with significant input from the Vermont public – is science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation."

(Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft
Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings

<https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>

Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015)Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025)

MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake->

ADDITIONALLY, Section 3.7 creates an indefinite restriction pathway under "management/research" without defined guardrails. Any such reviews should occur no more than once every five years.

Before expanding restrictions affecting lawful public water use, the Agency should ensure the evidentiary record meets peer-review standards, specifically ones that are backed by Vermont Science based and Peer reviewed research.

I respectfully oppose the proposal.

Thank you
Lonie Wasilewski
Shrewsbury, Vermont

I don't think your changes go far enough. I don't believe there is a 'one size fits all' solution, nor should there be. There should be no "flexibility" or "nuance" when it comes to safety.

I was among many speakers last winter and sent in comments at that time. Many others have spoken more eloquently than I. Specifically to Lake Fairlee, we should not have to sacrifice SAFETY, nor wider use of the water in favor of one family being able to endanger other users for their pleasure.

I feel strongly that Vermont lakes should be protected for quiet activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing and boating with only small electric motors to be used by people who fish.

Quiet activities on Vermont lakes would allow the proliferation of birds like loons and other land-based wildlife which are enjoyed by our citizens and visitors.

Boats with loud motors are more compatible with lakes with large human populations where noise and disruption already exist.

My comments are based not only on quality of life issues for all of us, but the economic viability of places which attract visitors who will contribute to tax revenue and vacation spending.

ANR,

Thank you for your time. After reviewing the scientific materials cited in this rulemaking, I oppose the proposed amendments.

There is no scientific basis for the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, which appears derived from ride geometry.

The 500-foot “any object” provision is inconsistent with wake attenuation research and creates an unsupported 360-degree exclusion zone beyond Vermont’s current 200-foot rule.

The 100-acre minimum does not reflect wake physics and should not be used as a proxy for environmental impact.

The key issue is evidentiary weight. While there is reference to research, research carries greater regulatory credibility, especially when being used for governmental rulemaking, when it is Peer-reviewed. This is because it has been independently scrutinized for methodological soundness.

The University of Minnesota wake work along with the Marr Et Al, relied upon in part by the Agency to determine the need for the 2025 rule engagement, is not peer reviewed and should be noted that way.

Peer-reviewed literature does exist and should be considered (specifically, Girod & Goudey; MacFarlane; Daeger). These 3 reports do not demonstrate that the proposed 2025 rule changes and numeric thresholds are environmentally or scientifically required.

I would also like to note that after reviewing the petitions that initiated both the original rule and more recently the ANR need to reopen the rule, the petition record largely reflects precautionary concern rather than quantitative environmental findings, this is Government driven by fear and not facts.

Finally, Section 3.7 risks enabling repeated or indefinite restrictions without a clear reinstatement timeline. This provision must be narrowly limited as this is a loophole for future “bans” restriction on lakes indefinitely.

Accordingly, the scientific justification for these expanded restrictions appears insufficient at this time and until there is Vermont specific, Peer Reviewed research to rely on.

The 2025 rule regarding the 500ft from any object when in the wakezone, the 100 acreage, and the 3000ft run should be removed from the 2025 rule expansion and remain as 50 acres, 500 ft from shore when in wakesports, and the wakezone geometry stay as written in the 2024 rule that is in place.

Hannah Roy

I respectfully oppose the proposed following rule changes.

Wake science does not support a 500-foot buffer from any object; the literature addresses shoreline attenuation. Vermont's 200-foot standard already provides a safety framework.

Similarly, the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement lacks peer-reviewed justification.

The 100-acre threshold is a mathematical screen, not an environmental response metric.

Most critically, Section 3.7 creates an open-ended pathway that could repeatedly restrict lakes without defined limits. At minimum, management reviews should be limited to once every five years with clear reinstatement criteria.

The petitions consistently cited precautionary concerns, which are understandable. However, statewide regulatory thresholds should be grounded in peer-reviewed evidence demonstrating a measurable environmental necessity. Advancing rulemaking based primarily on precautionary assertions, without such supporting evidence, risks departing from Vermont's evidence-based rulemaking framework.

Also, to note the research referenced by petitioners in 2023 along with the ANR 2025pre rule making materials, it was noted that the University of Minnesota (The SAFL/Marr) wake study cited in discussions is not peer reviewed.

Being in the science background myself, peer review is essential because it provides independent validation and helps ensure regulatory decisions are based on reliable science.

There is Peer-reviewed work, however it was not utilized by the ANR in their materials and presentations. These works were published by Girod & Goudey, MacFarlane, and Daeger, and all three of these do not support the 2025 rule advancement, specifically the numeric standards proposed with the 500ft buffer around the boat when in the wakezone, the acreage increase, nor the 3000 foot run or how a wakeboat operates in wakemode for the needs of the 3,000 foot run or any run specific size (as this is specific to the rider, the boat, the nature of wind and other wakes on the water at that time of use).

The current proposal appears to extend beyond what the peer-reviewed record supports, and to be honest, even extended past NON peer reviewed records.

Because of this I oppose the 2025 rule advancements, at this time and until there is Vermont specific, Peer Reviewed research to rely on.

The 2025 rule regarding the 500ft from any object when in the wake zone, the 100 acreage, and the 3000ft run should be removed from the 2025 rule expansion and remain as 50 acres, 500 ft from shore when in wakesports, and the wake zone geometry stay as written in the 2024 rule that is in place.

Thank you
Derek Roy

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes and urge the Agency to carefully review the scientific literature already in the record.

I formally oppose these key elements

The 100-acre minimum is not supported by environmental science and should not be used as a proxy for wake impact.

The 500-foot setback from any object improperly expands shoreline research into a mobile exclusion zone beyond Vermont's existing 200-foot rule.

There is likewise no peer-reviewed basis for the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, which appears tied to ride geometry rather than environmental necessity.

Finally, Section 3.7 creates a concerning mechanism for repeated or indefinite lake restrictions without a defined reinstatement timeline. This authority should be tightly limited, including a cap of one management review every five years.

Peer review is essential in environmental rulemaking because it provides independent validation of methodology, data interpretation, and conclusions.

When statewide numeric limits are proposed, agencies should rely primarily on peer-reviewed work rather than preliminary technical reports.

The peer-reviewed studies by Girod & Goudey (2015), MacFarlane (2025), and Daeger et al. support the framework reflected in Vermont's current 2024 rule — particularly the importance of depth and shoreline distance (20-foot depth and 500 feet from shore). These studies do not establish that a 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot straight run, or 500-foot "any object" buffer is environmentally necessary.

Secondarily, neither do the Non peer reviewed research noted from the ANR presentations nor the petitioners, support the necessity or scientific need to establish a 100-acre threshold, 3,000-foot straight run, or 500-foot "any object" buffer is environmentally necessary, as
It is also notable that ANR previously stated the 2024 rule was science-based and reflective of Vermont's balanced stewardship goals.

The peer-reviewed literature appears consistent with that conclusion, however these updated and expanded rules do not, as they are not based on science that notes these needs, nor peer reviewed science additionally.

I respectfully request the Agency take time to fully review the peer-reviewed, Vermont based, record before advancing additional restrictions that are not supported by new scientific findings. Additionally, I request the regulations should instead remain consistent with the current 2024 rule, specifically the 50-acre threshold, the 500-foot distance from shore while engaged in wakesports, and the wake-zone geometry as presently written.

Thank you
Mike Weand
Bridgewater , Vermont

I am writing today to share comments on the proposed language concerning wakesports in Vermont's lakes and ponds. The proposed language is not definitive enough, and I urge the state to implement a full ban on the use of wakeboats in all of Vermont's lakes and ponds. I share this sentiment as a surfer myself. Relocating a sport intended to enjoy the ocean's natural waves to the calm, fresh waters of inland lakes is both unnecessary and detrimental to the environment and our safe enjoyment of these lakes.

My extended family has a hundred-year history with Lake Morey in Fairlee, VT. As you are likely aware, Lake Morey has struggled with toxic blooms of cyanobacteria in recent years, which have recently been staved off with an alum treatment (and we are appreciative of the state's support for this). My understanding is that the commonly-cited guidance that wakesports are safe in an area with 20 ft of water depth are outdated and have been shown to be insufficient in studies. In addition to disrupting the efficacy of the alum treatment, disruption of the sediment throughout the lake releases phosphorus, which fuels the blooms.

Cyanobacteria blooms are not just an inconvenience. The neurotoxins produced by cyanobacteria are linked to diseases such as Alzheimer's. Members of my family are currently experiencing life-altering dementia due to Alzheimer's, and I am concerned that their exposure to these toxins is a likely contributor. While I am an ardent outdoor sports enthusiast, the cost of losing my loved ones too early in life is far too steep a price to pay.

This is to say nothing of the other impacts - eroding shorelines, destroying animal habitats, etc.

For all these reasons, I urge the state to consider a ban on wakesports in lakes and ponds.

Thank you for your consideration of comments,

After reviewing the materials presented in this rulemaking, I oppose the proposed changes.

Specifically,

- 100-acre minimum
- 3,000-foot straight run requirement
- 500-foot buffer from all objects

I strongly encourage ANR to closely review the peer-reviewed studies already published — including Girod & Goudey, MacFarlane, and Daeger., and not rely only on the research (which is not peer reviewed), as that research does not confirm the need to the changes and additionally should not be considered as a decision guide for this expansion of the 2024 rule.

Peer review matters because it ensures research has been independently vetted and is suitable for regulatory reliance.

Those peer-reviewed studies consistently emphasize (Girod & Goudey, MacFarlane, and Daeger):

- Depth matters
- Distance from shoreline matters
- Local conditions matter

These findings align closely with Vermont's current 2024 rule (20-foot depth and 500 feet from shore).

Importantly, the literature does NOT identify:

- A scientifically required 100-acre minimum
- A 3,000-foot straight run requirement
- A universal 500-foot buffer from all objects

To my knowledge, no new peer-reviewed research has emerged that exceeds or contradicts the scientific basis of the 2024 compromise rule nor solidifies the 2025 rule expansions from the ANR department.

I respectfully ask the Agency to pause and carefully compare the peer-reviewed record to the proposed expansions, as Facts and Science need to match, and right now the new 2025 rule does not follow that process.

The scientific justification for these expanded restrictions appears insufficient at this time. In the absence of Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research supporting these changes, the proposed 2025 provisions—specifically the 500-foot requirement from any object in the wake zone, the increase to 100 acres, and the 3,000-foot run—should be removed.

The existing 2024 rule should remain in place, including the 50-acre standard, the 500-foot from shore requirement while in wakesports, and the current wake-zone geometry.

Thank you
Jess Buckley

Dear ANR,

As someone who cares deeply about Vermont's lakes, I respectfully oppose the proposed changes. I have been a paddlers, swimmer, boater, and bird watchers and loon lover for over 50 years on all Vermont lakes and ponds and rivers.

I oppose:

The 3,000-foot straight-run standard is not established in peer-reviewed literature.

The 100-acre lake minimum functions as a definitional exclusion rather than an environmental safeguard.

The 500-foot buffer from any object extends shoreline research beyond its intended scope and conflicts with Vermont's existing 200-foot safety framework.

I additionally and ask ANR to carefully review the peer-reviewed research already available.

The peer-reviewed studies (Girod & Goudey; MacFarlane; Daeger) consistently support the importance of operating depth and shoreline setback — which is exactly what Vermont addressed in the 2024 rule.

ANR itself previously noted that the 2024 rule was science-based and reflected a compromise approach. After reviewing the literature, I see no new peer-reviewed science (and to be honest, no non peer reviewed either) that would justify expanding the restrictions further.

What concerns me is that the current proposal appears driven more by continued advocacy requests than by new validated research. At the most recent hearing, some speakers were already calling for even greater depth and distance requirements — which mathematically would remove additional lakes without new petitions or science.

Where does this stop (as it is evident the intent of the other side is a full ban on all lakes) however if we do not follow your own words that the 2024 rule was science-based and reflected a compromise approach, where do we go from here? ANR's own public comment stated: "The wakeboat rule – developed with significant input from the Vermont public – is science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation."

That is precisely why grounding decisions in peer-reviewed evidence is so important.

I respectfully request the Agency hold the line at the 2024 rule. Respectfully, the scientific justification for these expanded restrictions appears insufficient at this time. Until Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research is available to support the proposed changes, the 2025 rule provisions concerning the 500-foot distance from any object in the wake zone, the 100-acre requirement, and the 3,000-foot run should be withdrawn.

The current 2024 rule provides a balanced framework and should remain in effect, including the 50-acre minimum, the 500-foot from shore requirement while engaged in wakesports, and the wake-zone geometry as published.

Thank you

Pat Budlong

I am formally opposed to the proposed rule for the following reasons:

- No science establishes the need for a 3,000-foot straight run.
- Wake studies do not support a 500-foot buffer from any object; they evaluate shoreline attenuation, and Vermont already enforces a 500-foot safety distance.
- The 100-acre requirement is not an environmental metric and does not reflect wake physics. Acreage does not change wave attenuation.
- Section 3.7 creates a potentially permanent restriction pathway without defined limits or reinstatement criteria; at minimum, reviews should be capped, as this is a pathway to not have to monitor the process within the department, however allows the loophole of open ended restriction ,potentially permanently on a lake that would not normally have filed for management projects, seawall projects, research projects, just to prevent this style of boat from entering the waters.

I oppose the proposed rule changes and encourage ANR to conduct a side-by-side review of all published literatures, specifically. the peer-reviewed literature that is available, however has never been referenced in any of the ANR presentations in 2023 – 2026.

Peer review provides independent verification and is the gold standard for regulatory science. When

I compare the peer-reviewed studies by Girod & Goudey, MacFarlane, and Daeger to Vermont's current rule, there is clear alignment with:

- 20-foot depth considerations
- 500-foot shoreline setback

Which both of these are in place already with the 2024 rule.

However, I find no peer-reviewed support for (and to be honest no non peer reviewed either):

- Increasing acreage thresholds
- Mandating 3,000-foot runs
- Expanding to 500 feet from all objects

Absent new peer-reviewed findings, expanding statewide numeric restrictions appears premature, bias, and advocacy driven.

I respectfully urge ANR to reaffirm the science-based 2024 framework, as you have stated was the basis of the 2024 rule making process.

The scientific justification for these expanded restrictions appears insufficient at this time. In the absence of Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research supporting these changes, the proposed 2025 provisions—specifically the 500-foot requirement from any object in the wake zone, the increase to 100 acres, and the 3,000-foot run—should be removed.

The existing 2024 rule should remain in place, including the 50-acre standard, the 500-foot from shore requirement while in wakesports, and the current wake-zone geometry.

Regards,
Paul J Budlong

References

<https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>

<https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>

https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf

I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments.

- the 3,000-foot straight run requirement
- the 500-foot “any object” rule
- the change to a 100-acre minimum

Before adopting new statewide restrictions, I strongly urge ANR to thoroughly review additional reviews that I am submitting into the record.

These specifically are

Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft

Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings

[https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-](https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Various-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf)

[Sediment-Resuspension-by-Various-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf](https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Various-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf)

Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines

(2015)Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. [https://www.wsia.net/wp-](https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf)

[content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf](https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf)

MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025)

MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) [https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-](https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf)

[wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf](https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf)

Not only do these align with the 2024 rule that is in place now. These are additionally peer reviewed and should hold a greater weight due to that fact. Peer review is essential because it ensures scientific conclusions have been independently validated and are appropriate for policy reliance.

The peer-reviewed studies (Girod & Goudey; MacFarlane; Daeger) support the depth and shoreline framework reflected in the 2024 rule. They do not establish a scientific need for the expanded numeric thresholds now proposed

- o - the 3,000-foot straight run requirement
- o the 500-foot “any object” rule
- o the change to a 100-acre minimum

ANR previously stated the 2024 rule was science-based. Based on the peer-reviewed record, that assessment appears correct.

I respectfully request the Agency allow the 2024 compromise to remain in place, as the science and facts match the current rule (minus the acreage) .

At present, the scientific justification for the proposed expanded restrictions appears insufficient. Without Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research to support these measures, the 2025 additions— 500 feet from any object in the wake zone, the 100-acre minimum, and the 3,000-foot run—should be removed.

The rule should remain aligned with the 2024 standard: 50 acres, 500 feet from shore while in wakesports, and the existing wake-zone geometry.

Thank You,
Ryan Buckley

Dear ANR rule makers:

I am writing today to express thoughts on your proposed wake boat rule changes.

I am commenting from the point of view of a landowner on Little Averill Lake, Averill Vt, NEK and a board member of the Averill Lakes Association, which represents all those interested in what's best for these 2 lakes.

The proposed ruling changes will ban wake boat sporting on all VT lakes except 18. 11 of them are in the NEK and 2 of those 11 lakes are the Averill Lakes. This sort effectively pushes wake boats towards the cleanest lakes in your state. Likely, the NEK lakes are your cleanest. And the Averills are 2 of the cleanest of the cleanest. THIS MAKES NO SENSE!

In addition, I will make note here, that Averill is one of the least publicly served towns and areas in VT.

YES. The proposed changes will add safety buffers from users, loons and other structures from 200 ft to now 500 ft. This is a positive.

However, They have removed the Home Lake Rule which would have required wake boat owners to declare one lake for the season, making a peace between wake sporters interests and lake interests, confident that they remain on their home lake minimizing the movement of wake boats between lakes and decreasing the risk of spread of Aquatic Invasives in their ballast tank.

On top of that ... The proposed changes also are removing proof of decontamination after coming from another lake as the state only has 4 functioning decontamination stations-three of which 3 are on Lake Champlain. None in the NEK. It would seem the logic here is that if decon stations are limited, then we should eliminate the requirement to decontaminate? As opposed to developing a system to strengthen decon and monitoring to help protect our clean water.

The Averills are clean, AIS free and remote. However we are close to the borders of Canada and NH and will now be on the shrinking list of VT allowable lakes.

The State of Vermont is at a crossroads here. Some have put forth a proposed moratorium on wake boats coming to these eligible lakes until DEC puts the necessary infrastructure in place to monitor and clean these boat ballasts.

This is not a unique challenge for VT. Many states do this already. Their perspective and commitment is that CLEAN WATER PAYS FOR ITSELF! Clean AIS free water is an economic engine, which once lost, is very expensive to recover.

Zebra mussels were found last season in memframagog. Once they are introduced the costs and devastation are enduring and it is our communities who will bare the impact economically and recreationally.

Please. Think about the cost and benefits of accepting this risk. Keep the wake boats where they are for now. And work to develop a system of control to keep AIS out of our lakes. Push back against wake boat industry. They are transient by definition, and care little for the waters they ply. If they care, then let them belly up and help find a solution which protects our waters along with the rest of us.

The analogy I keep coming back to is:

We don't have the resources to manage something effectively, so let's just not manage it at all.

We don't have enough COPS to patrol all the roads and control speeding. So let's just take down the speed limit signs and let folks drive as fast as as they want. No control!

VT and Vermonters pride themselves on being 'green', caring for their natural resources, and doing what is necessary to protect them from harm.

Don't miss this ball. Times are tough right now (aren't they always), but allowing complacency to enhance a vector for AIS spread will be regretted long into the future.

Say 'NO' to the wake boaters now, so we can say 'YES' to them with responsible controls.

Respectfully -

Dear ANR,

I respectfully oppose the proposed changes and ask ANR to carefully review their own message and science that is being used to validate these decisions to move forward, as we are being told this is not a popularity contest, however it does seem that voices and advocacy are winning over facts and science, when this is a fact and science based department and decision.

The existing 2024 rule appears to reflect what the peer-reviewed literature actually supports: depth, shoreline distance, and balanced use pertaining to the current 500 feet from shore and 20 foot depth requirement.

However there are portions in the 2024 rule that are not scientifically based, at that time, those opposed (myself) felt there was a compromise that occurred to allow both sides to be heard and considered, however we are here again with one side being heard, and hopefully my comment will truly be considered.

What I do not see in the research being used on record from ANR and petitioners, is that these documents do not support the newer proposed numbers. Without new validated and peer reviewed research, continuing to layer additional restrictions risks moving policy ahead of science.

At recent hearings, some advocates have already requested even greater limits. That makes it especially important that ANR anchor decisions firmly in peer-reviewed evidence rather than escalating requests, as that is what seems to be happening at this time, since the 2024 rule has been in effect, with no issues reported.

Please take the time to review the peer-reviewed studies closely. They support the current 2024 rule, that your own department put in place prior based on the same science that you are referencing, therefore no new science was published to establish this advancement to the 2024 rule. Specifically, the 3,000-foot straight run requirement, the 500-foot "any object" rule, the change to a 100-acre minimum

Please review all of the science out there before making this decision, as there is no peer reviewed science that justifies these changes, beyond the request from petitioners and advocates alike. I would encourage a Vermont Based peer review completed before any additional changes are added to the 2024 rule in place.

Thank you
Courtney Robinson
Fair Haven, Vermont

References that I would like to submit below

University of Minnesota — St. Anthony Falls Laboratory
Research on wake wave characteristics, energy, and attenuation relative to distance and depth
<https://cse.umn.edu/safl/news/umn-researchers-study-waves-created-recreational-boats>
Marr et al., Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves (2022)
Wave height, energy, and attenuation study https://coalitionnavigation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/BoatGeneratedWakeWaveReport_Feb12022_Final.pdf
Lake Waramaug Task Force — Shallow Water Environment Wave Impact Study (2024)

Wave energy propagation and shoreline distance findings

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852df852e69cfa768783fd0/t/6791117b64c0e95b7061fb1b/1737560444987/LWTaskForce%2BShallow%2BWater%2BEnvironment%2BWave%2BImpact%2BStudy%2BFinal%2BReport%2B010825.pdf>

Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft
Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings

<https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>

Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015)Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025)

MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>

Please protect our waters. There are plenty of larger, already deeply infiltrated lakes around that people can go to to make noise and disruption.

The problems without further protections are many and profound: safety issues for swimmers and boaters, introduction of invasive species, threats to loon nests, shore and bottom erosion, and much more.

I am writing in opposition to the proposed changes. I am a New Hampshire resident and frequent guest at Lake Fairlee and other VT bodies of water.

Specifically, I oppose the following:

- 3,000-Foot Straight Run Requirement
 - o There is no scientific or environmental research establishing 3,000 feet as necessary for environmental protection. This figure reflects typical ride patterns and geometry, not hydrodynamic or shoreline impact data.
- Oppose the 500-Foot Buffer from “Any Object” in a Wake Zone
 - o Wake studies focus on shoreline wave attenuation — not 360° “object exclusion” zones. Vermont already operates under a 200-foot safety framework. This proposal creates a moving exclusion bubble that makes lawful operation extremely difficult and impractical.
- Oppose Section 3.7 – Lake Management / Research Provision
 - o This section creates a pathway where an already-approved lake could be restricted under a “management” or “research” designation without a clearly defined reinstatement timeline.
 - o Without clear criteria, study parameters, and a set reinstatement schedule, this functions as an indefinite access suspension mechanism rather than a transparent research process.
- Vermont Boater Education – Regulatory Implementation & Accountability Concern
 - o Before adding additional restrictions, the State must ensure existing rules are fully implemented, communicated, and incorporated into official boater education and enforcement training. Regulatory expansion without proper education undermines compliance, fairness, and public trust.

The following two items the ones I object to the most strenuously:

- Oppose the 100-Acre Minimum Lake Size
 - o Lake acreage is a mathematical measurement, not an indicator of environmental response. Wake energy and wave behavior do not change simply because a lake exceeds a certain surface size. This threshold functions as a policy tool to eliminate lakes by definition, not science.
- Oppose Labeling Wakesports as a “Non-Normal Use”
 - o Towed watersports using inboard boats clearly predate 1993. The evolution of boat technology does not make the activity itself a “new” use. Wakesurfing represents a modern evolution of long-standing recreational boating practices.

Regards,
Stephanie McLaughlin

I don't believe the proposed changes to wakesports go far enough. Keeping the larger wakesports boats out of smaller lakes will help prevent the spread of invasive species.

My husband and I are appreciative of the work the DEC has done restricting wake boats on some small lakes in Vermont for both environmental and safety reasons. This is especially relevant for us who kayak on Lake Raconda in Wilmington.

As residents of Jacksonville, Vt we have canoed, sailed, fished, swam and kayaked on Lake Whitingham (Harriman Reservoir) for over 50 years. And while Lake Whitingham is the largest lake entirely in Vermont, wake boats continue to pose a significant safety hazard for not only kayakers but also swimmers and users of smaller craft. These boats cause waves to form of such height and intensity that is only ever seen on the lake from storms so ferocious that nobody in their right mind would be on the water.

The two areas in the DEC map of designated wake boat areas are not near the three motorboat launch facilities which are not overseen by any state personnel. There is to my knowledge no state-owned buoys marking areas for wake boat to operate so basically they face are no restrictions. Department of Fish & Wildlife patrols they are infrequent.

On nice summer days we share the lake with many different kinds and sizes of boats as well as the ubiquitous jet ski. As kayakers of course we have to pay attention to those around us but wake boats add a whole new level of dangerousness.

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments.

I respectfully oppose:

- the proposed 3,000-foot straight run
- the proposed 500-foot buffer
- the proposed 100-acre lake requirement

On May 1, 2024, ANR publicly stated: “The wakeboat rule – developed with significant input from the Vermont public – is science-based and reflective of Vermonters’ shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation.” I appreciated that balanced approach.

The current proposal appears to move away from that science-anchored framework. The new numeric thresholds do not appear to be supported by new independently validated research specific to Vermont waters. Instead, the record suggests continued pressure from advocacy groups seeking broader restrictions.

Sound environmental policy must remain rooted in verifiable scientific evidence, not escalating requests. The 2024 rule represented a thoughtful compromise that aligned with the available research on depth and shoreline distance.

I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments.

I strongly urge ANR to review the peer-reviewed studies already published (see details below) . These studies support the existing 2024 rule structure and do not demonstrate the need for expanded statewide numeric limits.

I am particularly concerned that the current proposal may reflect ongoing advocacy pressure rather than new scientific findings. At recent hearings, some participants were already requesting even greater restrictions, which suggests the goalposts may continue to move.

Regulatory stability requires anchoring decisions in peer-reviewed evidence. At this time, that evidence supports the existing rule, but not the advancement of the 2024 rule.

Please pause and review the science carefully. I respectfully urge ANR to reaffirm its May 2024 position and maintain the current rule unless new, rigorously vetted, Vermont specific, scientific findings clearly demonstrate the need for further change.

Thank you,
Jeff Robinson
Vermont Resident

Additional scientific references below
Daeger et al., 2023 — sediment resuspension

Goudey & Girod, 2015 — wake-sport wakes

MacFarlane, 2025 — wake comparisons

I OPPOSE 3000ft Straight Run, No Scientific or environmental research establishes 3000ft as necessary

I OPPOSE 500ft from any object in wakezone, VT already uses a 200ft safety system

I OPPOSE 100 acre Minimum, Wake energy does not change based on lake surface size, lake acreage is math not environmental response.

I OPPOSE NON Normal Use argument, Towed watersports with inboard boats clearly predate 1993. Technology evolving does not make the activity a "new use". Wake surfing is an evolution of long standing boating recreation.

I OPPOSE Section 3.7 Lake management/Research

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is about to promulgate a rule that will set out for the first time the area and depth bounds of a lake upon which anyone may operate a wake boat.

These boats are not new, but their use on Vermont lakes has ballooned and shows every sign of continued growth. There is some good news and some bad news in this proposed rule but first, for those who are not acquainted with them: What the heck is a wake boat?

A wake boat is a power craft designed to create large wakes that allow for surfing behind the boat without needing a tow rope. Surfers just surf the wake.

A wake boat “plows” through the water with its bow up, an orientation that mimics a slow-moving powerboat that creates a larger wake than a boat that has planed off. The wake boat maintains its bow-up posture while reaching surfing speeds, using big engines and even bigger ballast tanks in the stern of the boat.

Wake-surfing waves are 2.5 times larger and have five to nine times the peak power of conventional waterskiing waves. A 2014 Montreal study reported that, to protect shorelines from this heavier wave action, wake boats need to operate at least 984 feet from shore.

The bad news in the proposed rule is that the Department of Environmental Conservation would require only a meager indefensible 500-foot distance from shore to operate.

Unlike the traditionally designed powerboat that thrusts its propwash directly astern, the plowing design — the bow-up, stern-down orientation of a wake boat — thrusts propwash downward with power equivalent to a Mack truck that roils the bottom and uproots plants at depths of 20 feet or more.

This roiling of a lake bottom with a history of nutrient loading — and all our lakes have such a history — releases legacy phosphorus that has lain on the bottom into the water column, adding food for accelerated plant growth and possible toxic algae blooms.

Our lake bottoms hold legacy deposits of phosphorus because of excessive fertilizer runoff and the very life cycle of aquatic plants. When aquatic plants die, they drift to the bottom and rot, either with or without oxygen, but the various plant parts chemically change to other benign substances — except for the phosphorus.

When the plant rots around it, the phosphorus tends to go back to its inorganic state, and that is the state plants use to fuel their growth. Phosphorus will stay inactive and unused, if left alone buried in the lake substrate, but when propwash stirs up the bottom, that pent-up concentration of phosphorus goes back into the water column to feed blue-green algae and accelerate plant growth.

A more immediate impact from the powerful downward thrust of the propwash occurs in the littoral zone, the food-producing shallow and close-to-shore heart of any lake. These shallower regions are the nursery of all that lives in our lakes and ponds — home to juvenile fish, mayflies, dragonflies, and other macro invertebrate critical to the aquatic food chain.

Wake boat prop was operating in less than 20 feet of water disturbs and/or buries this fragile critical habitat.

But here is some of the good news in the proposed rules; the rule would disallow wake boats in shallow

smaller lakes completely, and in large, deeper lakes allow their operation only where the water depth was greater than 20 feet.

The Department of Environmental Conservation began developing the rule to control the negative impacts of wake boats when a citizen petition — brought to it by the on-lake residents of Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes — gave voice to their concern that wake boats are not healthy for small or shallow lakes. The department has pretty much agreed with them and has set out a rule that serves our lakes well — except for the ineffective separation distance to shore of less than 1,000 feet.

Sign up for the in-person public hearing Aug. 1 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the Pavilion Auditorium, 109 State St., Montpelier, to give your two- minut

I oppose 3000 Ft straight run, no scientific or environmental research establishes this as necessary
I oppose 500 ft from any object in wake zone, VT already has a 200 ft safety system
I oppose 100 acre minimum. Wake energy does not change based on lake surface size, lake acreage is math not environmental response.

I oppose non normal use argument. Towed watersports with inboard boats clearly predate 1993. Technology evolving does not make the activity a new use. Wake surfing is an evolution of long standing boating recreation.

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I support the proposed changes to decrease wake boat access to Vermont's lakes. As a lifelong Thetford resident, I learned to swim and canoe in Lake Fairlee and now take my young children. At the lake they are learning to swim in calm water, identify loons and fish over the edge of a canoe, be amazed by the native plants that grow along the edges and in the shallows of the lake (that are prone to erosion from wake waves) and bask in the quiet wonder of public access to a lake environment. Four generations of my family have all become strong long distance swimmers with the safe and accessible areas of the lake free of wake boats.

The number of people, especially children, animals, birds, insects and plant species who benefit from a lake with calm water, quiet air, and limited access to contamination from other lakes greatly outnumber the number of people who have the time, money, infrastructure to access wake boating.

The overwhelming spirit of Lake Fairlee, as it seems to have existed prior to the invention of wake producing boats, is one that welcomes all with tranquility. Lake Fairlee is special because of its gentle and timeless effect. I feel strongly that such spaces remain unchanged by the rapid pace of our culture.

I am a Lake Morey, Fairlee, VT homeowner. I am writing to express my favor of a total ban on Wakesurfing in VT. 500 feet from shore is not enough - let's increase the language to 1000 feet from shore, at the very least.

A total ban on wakesurfing will protect lake ecology, public safety and enjoyment, and expensive alum treatments preventing cyanobacteria growth. In addition, a total ban would provide a control which could be used by other states using alum treatments to see if a ban does make a significant difference.

Other wake sports, such as waterskiing, have been enjoyed for decades and do not pose the same threats as wakesurfing with the large wakes and ballast tanks that could spread invasive species between lakes.

Imagine a quiet evening I spent last summer on Lake Morey. As the sun began to set and the surface of the water turned to glass, I set out for a quiet boat ride with my sensitive child and elderly mother to visit the loons and their babies. Along came a wakesurfing boat with its oceansize waves. Loons disappeared, my child and his grandmother shrieked and clawed at my arms for support as our boat thrashed. Waves crashed against the shore with force, kicked up sediment, and eroded the shoreline to the point our stepping stones over the summer have caved in and our boats and dock received damage.

This is a real problem, striking on many levels. Let's use stronger language to be sure we protect what is precious.

I am seven. I am learning to swim in Lake Fairlee. I like loons and otters and canoeing. I think lakes should not have wake boat access.

I support DEC proposed changes to wake boat rules on Vermont lakes. Campers & their parents shouldn't have to worry about wakes when they're recreating. Anyone using the lake shouldn't have to worry.

I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments and am intentionally keeping this comment focused on objective considerations rather than personal feelings.

I oppose the proposed changes, including the :

The 3,000-foot straight-run standard is not established in peer-reviewed literature.

The 100-acre lake minimum functions as a definitional exclusion rather than an environmental safeguard.

The 500-foot buffer from any object extends shoreline research beyond its intended scope and conflicts with Vermont's existing 200-foot safety framework.

Additionally, Section 3.7 creates an indefinite restriction pathway under "management/research" without defined dates and details. Any such reviews should occur no more than once every decade or half a decade.

The 2024 rule was described by ANR as science-based and balanced. That compromise helped many Vermonters feel heard.

Moving the goalposts now without new, independently confirmed scientific findings risks undermining that balance.

Continued advocacy alone should not drive statewide regulatory expansion.

Please hold at the 2024 rule unless new science (as you have noted that is what this original rule was based on) , specifically Vermont based, Peer reviewed science that clearly requires otherwise.

The 2024 wakeboat rule emerged from a difficult but ultimately constructive negotiation process. ANR itself confirmed in May 2024 that the rule was grounded in science and reflected Vermonters' shared interests.

That acknowledgment was important because it signaled the Agency believed the regulatory framework matched the available environmental understanding.

At present, I do not see new rigorously substantiated research showing the existing depth and shoreline provisions are insufficient. Instead, the current proposal appears to be influenced heavily by continued advocacy requests.

These are the research references I have been referring to
University of Minnesota, St. Anthony Falls Laboratory — wake wave attenuation research.

Marr et al. (2022) — Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves.

Lake Waramaug Task Force (2024) — shallow water wave impact study.

Daeger et al. (2023) — sediment resuspension by watercraft.

Goudey & Girod (2015) — wake-sport wake characterization.

MacFarlane (2025) — comparative wake characteristics.

It is also notable that multiple petitions prompting this rule reopening came from lakes where wakeboats were not yet present. That suggests the policy driver is increasingly precautionary in nature. A useful comparison would be redesigning a bridge to handle traffic volumes that have not materialized, based solely on projections rather than measured structural stress. Good planning considers the future, but regulatory expansion should still be proportionate to demonstrated

conditions.

The 2024 rule represented two sides meeting at a workable middle ground. I respectfully encourage ANR to preserve that balance unless new environmental evidence clearly supports further change. The current 2024 rule provides a balanced framework and should remain in effect , including the 50-acre standard, the 500-foot from shore requirement while engaged in wakesports, and the wake-zone geometry as written.

Thank you for your time and consideration

I oppose the proposed amendments and ask that regulatory standards remain proportional, evidence-based, and clearly tied to demonstrated ecological need rather than geometric modeling or advocacy pressure. Upholding that standard is essential not only for environmental protection, but for preserving confidence that Vermont's waters are managed fairly, consistently, and for the benefit of all lawful users. Thank you.

I am supportive of the proposed modification to the rule with no further changes. Please do not compromise on the 100 acre minimum wake sport zone or the 500 foot safety buffer.

I am a member of the board at Camp Billings, a summer camp on Lake Fairlee, the treasurer of the Lake Fairlee Association, and community member who swims and kayaks on Lake Fairlee.

As a board member of Camp Billings, my main concern is camper safety. The Camp has been on the Lake since 1906 so safe use of the Lake is a tradition enjoyed by campers at Billings as well as Camps Lochearn, Ohana, Aloha Hive, and Horizons. Our campers go to the middle of the Lake, the wake sports zone, everyday as they paddleboard, kayak, canoe, sail and row. Even close to shore, campers are threatened by the big waves generated by boats in wake sport mode. Our Camp directors report that campers have been knocked off our swim docks by high waves generated by wake sporters. Children should have the opportunity to learn new skills in a safe environment.

Along our Camp Billings shoreline, the fragility of the lake front is noticeable. There are changes each year due to wave and ice action. Erosion of the lakeshore has progressed to the foundation of at least one of our buildings. By their nature, wake sports exacerbate wave action and will further damage the banks of the Lake.

The Lake Fairlee Association has worked for many years to improve the water quality and the environment of Lake Fairlee. Wake sports work at cross purposes to these goals. The water quality of the lake is diminished by the invasives transported by the ballasts of wake sport boats and by the propellor action of boats by disturbing sediments from the bottom of the Lake. Other motor boat use does not have the negative impacts associated with boats in wake sports mode.

As a member of the public who uses Lake Fairlee, waves from wake sports create hazards to me and my friends who like to swim and kayak on the Lake. Waves from wake sports can overwhelm me while I swim and kayak.

I worry that a wake sport zone on Lake Fairlee will attract wake sport users creating less safe conditions for users of the Lake and more environmental damage.

Dear ANR,

I respectfully oppose the proposed changes in the 2025 wakeboat rule proposal.

Because of what I have learned, I respectfully oppose:

- the 3,000-foot straight run requirement
- the 500-foot “any object” rule
- the change to a 100-acre minimum

The existing 2024 rule was the product of significant public engagement and compromise. ANR publicly affirmed it was science-based. That determination should remain the benchmark for evaluating whether further restrictions are warranted.

I am concerned that the current proposal reflects a shift from evidence-driven management toward increasingly precautionary regulation. Several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakeboats are not currently operating on those waters. That raises the question of whether the regulatory focus is moving from addressing measured impacts to preventing hypothetical future conditions.

Coming from an analytical background, in many fields of risk management, major policy changes are typically triggered by observed patterns — not solely by concern that an activity could occur. For example, floodplain maps are revised based on documented hydrologic data, not simply because a river might someday rise higher.

The 2024 rule already addressed the key physical variables identified in the literature: depth and shoreline setback. Without new validated environmental findings (which there are none that are creating the need for this advancement and no new data is being used or referenced since the 2024 rule was put in place), expanding the numeric thresholds risks moving beyond what the science presently supports.

I respectfully urge ANR to maintain the existing rule and preserve the integrity of the compromise that was previously reached.

Respectfully, the scientific justification for these expanded restrictions appears insufficient at this time. In the absence of Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research supporting the proposed changes, the 2025 provisions related to the 500-foot setback from any object in the wake zone, the 100-acre minimum, and the 3,000-foot run should be withdrawn.

The existing 2024 rule offers a balanced and evidence-based framework and should remain in effect, including the 50-acre standard, the 500-foot from shore requirement during wakesports, and the wake-zone geometry as currently written.

Please see the current published references of science that I am referring to as well

- University of Minnesota, St. Anthony Falls Laboratory — wake wave attenuation research.
- Marr et al. (2022) — Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves.
- Lake Waramaug Task Force (2024) — shallow water wave impact study.
- Daeger et al. (2023) — sediment resuspension by watercraft.
- Goudey & Girod (2015) — wake-sport wake characterization.
- MacFarlane (2025) — comparative wake characteristics.

Thank you

Dear Vermont Agency of Natural Resources,

As a Vermont high school student getting ready to go out into the college and working world soon and studying science and civics, I have been following the proposed wakesports rulemaking process alongside my parents.

In both my science and government classes, we are taught that sound policy should be grounded in peer-reviewed evidence, transparent reasoning, and balanced input. After reviewing the meetings, I am concerned that key elements of this proposal do not appear to be clearly supported by scientific consensus.

Specifically, I respectfully oppose:

the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement

the 500-foot “any object” buffer

the 100-acre minimum lake threshold

I encourage the Agency to ensure that any final rule is firmly rooted in verifiable, peer reviewed science that is reflective of Vermont specific geology, and reflects careful consideration of all perspectives.

After review of this process, I feel the 2024 rule does in fact match the peer review science that I have researched (see my references below*), and has a few extra items of protection that are not based on science, however this final rule for 2025 seems to be a bit of a reach outside of science and civics.

Respectfully,
Marshall Robinson
A Vermont student

* References

University of Minnesota, St. Anthony Falls Laboratory — wake wave attenuation research.

Marr et al. (2022) — Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves.

Lake Waramaug Task Force (2024) — shallow water wave impact study.

Daeger et al. (2023) — sediment resuspension by watercraft.

Goudey & Girod (2015) — wake-sport wake characterization.

MacFarlane (2025) — comparative wake characteristics.

I support the change, but it doesn't go far enough. It should be increased to 1000 feet from shore.

Dear Vermont Agency of Natural Resources,

As a Vermont high school student and I have been closely observing the wakesports rule discussions with my family to better understand how regulatory decisions are made.

In my coursework, we are consistently taught to place trust in peer-reviewed research, reproducible results, and evidence-based decision making.

One aspect of this process that concerns me is the timeline: the current rule was implemented less than a year ago, yet significant new restrictions are already being proposed.

Based on my review of the materials and public discussions, it appears that some of these proposed changes are being driven by petitions that do not clearly present supporting scientific analysis. From an academic perspective, this makes it difficult to understand how the process is remaining grounded in objective research.

Accordingly, I respectfully oppose:

the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement

the 500-foot “any object” buffer

the 100-acre minimum lake threshold

I encourage the Agency to ensure that any future rulemaking remains firmly rooted in peer-reviewed science, transparent evidence, and balanced stakeholder input.

Respectfully,
Bayne Robinson

2/20/26

Re: Latest Proposed Wake Sport Rule Changes:

Please note I am submitting a minimally edited version of my original petition letter to the State of Vermont to communicate my ongoing opposition to any State law which permits wake sports on Willoughby, at any distance. I remain steadfast in asserting the best thing for Willoughby is “no wake boats” on Willoughby and re-appeal to the State of Vermont to not let Willoughby down and, instead, join us in protecting our notably magnificent, notably pristine glacial lake by supporting a ban of wake sports on Willoughby.

Note: Original Petition Letter to State of Vermont to follow.

Respectfully,
Deb Smith
President, Westmore Association

Original Petition Letter:

To Whom it May Concern:

It will come as no surprise to all the good folks in Westmore and beyond that the Westmore Association’s passionate and longstanding commitment to the care and preservation of our magnificent glacial lake and its notably awe-inspiring mountains — mountains that guide us home however near or far — is a labor of love.

Along with restoring Willoughby to its original pristine water classification, the Westmore Association has been busy protecting the integrity of our shoreline, the purity of our surrounding mountain brooks and streams, and the habitats of all our neighbors; resident loons, peregrine falcons, eagles, rainbow trout and salmon among them. As a result, per that commitment, the Westmore Association is dedicated to and intent upon raising awareness regarding the risks of allowing wake boats in wave-generating “wake boat mode” on Willoughby, at any distance, at any time, prompting a well-considered well-met formal announcement at annual meeting in July: The best thing for Willoughby is no wake boats on Willoughby.

The imminently unsettling prospect, per the State of Vermont, to allow wake sports on Willoughby supportive of setting the distance from shore for wake boats at 500 feet, combined with an inability, per their design, to ensure wake boat ballasts are free of invasive species such as milfoil and zebra mussels, affirms that decision.

On a very personal note: When I was young and newly permitted by my parents to go wherever I wished out on Willoughby at the helm of my family’s old fishing boat, hand carved by my grandfather and notably beautiful in its simplicity, I found myself down between the mountains, happy in my new freedom as I gazed up at Pisgah, Mt. Hor behind me, basking in all the beauty. All of it! And as I did, I thought to myself, with equal parts joy and relief, how lucky we are that our lake is forever entrusted to the care of the State of Vermont and as such would be forever protected, forever pristine, forever glorious.

I appeal to the State of Vermont to not let Willoughby down and to join us in protecting our lake by

supporting a ban of wake sports on Willoughby.

Deb Smith

President, Westmore Association

Increase to 1000 ft from
Shore

The Lake Morey Alum treatment was a great success in addressing the cyanobacteria blooms and overall lakewater quality. The treatment not only filtered the lakewaters, but resulted in a protective "blanket" on the lake bottom that will guard the lake against cyano blooms for years to come. If this protective layer is disturbed, it might allow the phosphorus trapped at the lake bottom to be released and the blooms to return.

Studies indicate that the propeller wash from wake boats can disturb the lake bottom at depths up to and possibly greater than 20 feet which could put the current Alum treatment at risk. Wake boarding on Lake Morey doesn't seem prudent based on the lake's fragile ecosystem and the possibility of reversing the great success we've seen from the Alum treat last summer and hopefully many more to come.

I learned to swim at Lake Fairlee and have many wonderful memories of visiting. It is important to protect the tranquility of this special place - the vulnerable natural habitat, wildlife and people who are adversely affected by large wake boats. Thank you!

I respectfully oppose the proposal.

- the 3,000-foot straight run
- the 500-foot object buffer
- the 100-acre minimum

I respectfully oppose the proposed rule changes and am striving to keep this comment grounded in objective evidence.

ANR previously stated the 2024 rule was science-based. That finding reflected the available hydrodynamic and sediment research, which emphasized depth and shoreline distance as the key environmental controls.

Here are the references that the current rule was based on per the documents presented on the website for the rulemaking (petitions and ANR presentations).

- Marr et al., 2022 — Wake wave characterization
- UMN St. Anthony Falls Lab — wake attenuation research
- Lake Waramaug Task Force, 2024 — shoreline wave impacts

Additionally here are three more research publications that have been reviewed and are a stronger voice with that, and again these additional publications do not warrant scientifically additional rules to the 2024 existing one.

- Daeger et al., 2023 — sediment resuspension
- Goudey & Girod, 2015 — wake-sport wakes
- MacFarlane, 2025 — wake comparisons

I do not see new independently corroborated research showing that the current rule is failing environmentally, or the need to advance the current rule to the proposed 2025 rule.

Instead, the present push appears largely driven by continued advocacy and precautionary petitions, including several from lakes without existing wakesurf activity.

In infrastructure planning, engineers typically do not redesign a structure based solely on theoretical maximum loads unless monitoring data indicates stress is approaching critical thresholds. Regulatory policy benefits from the same discipline.

The 2024 framework already addressed the primary physical factors identified in the research. Expanding beyond that without new validated evidence risks undermining the balance that was previously achieved.

I respectfully urge ANR to hold at the current rule. The proposed expansions appear to lack sufficient scientific support at this time. Pending Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research, the 2025 additions involving the 500-foot “any object” buffer, the 100-acre threshold, and the 3,000-foot run should be withdrawn.

Maintaining the current 2024 rule—including the 50-acre standard, 500 feet from shore while wakesurfing, and the existing wake-zone geometry—will best preserve a science-based approach.

Thank you,
Kara

I am a resident of Waterbury Vermont. I am an avid user of the Waterbury Reservoir among multiple other bodies of waters . I am a Waterbury Selectboard member so I represent Town residents. I also represent many conservation organizations. The proposed wake sports regulations are not consistent with the views of local residents. The Reservoir is not conducive to wake sports activity. Beside erosion of the shoreline, the potential transfer of invasive organisms will degenerate the Reservoir. There are also conflicts with motorized fishing craft, non motorized car and swimmers. I am not against wakeboat totally because everyone has a right to recreate in a safe way. Very large bodies of water can be appropriate for wakeboats. Bodies of water such as wakeboats are not appropriate for Waterbury Reservoir and other smaller water bodies. Thank you for considering my comments.

Keep Willoughby clean!!

February 19, 2026

ANR.WSMDLakes@vermont.gov

“Wakesports”

To Whom it May Concern,

I support the current proposed UPW Rule revisions but they do not go far enough and need stricter regulations to protect all Vermont lakes.

Too many small lakes and ponds are too vulnerable for hosting loud engined wakesports due to their ocean-sized intense waves endangering public safety, the lake environment, shorelines, lake bottoms, aquatic ecosystems, fisheries, wildlife and scenic tranquil beauty.

I support the following:

Increasing the minimum size of the wakesports zone from 50 to 100 minimum acres

Explicitly requiring that a wakesport zone must accommodate a 3,000 ft run

Prohibiting wakesports within 500 feet of other lake recreation users and nesting loon locations whether along the shoreline or on floating platforms

The requirement for wake boats traveling between waterbodies to go to a state watercraft decontamination station to have ballast tanks or bags receive a hot water decontamination and show proof of the procedure. prior to entering a wakesports eligible waterbody.

Areas the rule can strengthen:

Increase the 20-foot wakesport water depth requirement to 30 feet deep or greater

Increase the 500 foot shoreline buffer to 700 feet or larger.

Adding a statement within the UPW rules of and commitment to the Precautionary Principle during decision considerations especially for all watercraft that is not a “normal use”: "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."

Wakesports are a net negative impact for the environment and should be ultimately prohibited on all Vermont inland lakes and ponds due to their inherent public safety threats that also damage property and shorelines. Wakesports have a net negative impact and should be prohibited on all inland lakes and ponds in Vermont. Additionally, when operating in shared international waters, these lakes should receive the same protective shoreline and public safety regulations. Regardless of the size of the waterbody, wakesports must maintain a distance of at least 500 feet from all shorelines and 500 feet from other users of the lake while recreating.

Thank you for your consideration and saving 12 lakes too small for wakesports activities

Ronald Hill

I respectfully oppose the proposed changes and am intentionally framing this comment around empirical evidence and regulatory consistency.

The items I oppose specifically are

- There is no scientific basis for the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, which appears derived from ride geometry.
- The 500-foot “any object” provision is inconsistent with wake attenuation research and creates an unsupported 360-degree exclusion zone beyond Vermont’s current 200-foot rule.
- The 100-acre minimum does not reflect wake physics and should not be used as a proxy for environmental impact.
- Finally, Section 3.7 risks enabling repeated or indefinite restrictions without a clear reinstatement timeline. This provision must be narrowly limited.

The 2024 rule emerged from extensive public process and was explicitly affirmed by ANR as science-based. That conclusion should remain the reference point for evaluating whether additional restrictions are justified. (^ please see references that were noted in the documents to form this 2024 rule at the end of this comment)

From a biological and environmental management perspective, regulatory expansion is typically warranted when new data demonstrate measurable impact. In this case, several petitions prompting the reopening of this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently operating on those waters. This raises a fundamental question about whether the policy focus is shifting from managing observed effects to regulating hypothetical future presence.

In applied environmental science, precaution has value, but it is normally calibrated to documented risk indicators. The current framework already addresses the primary physical drivers identified in the literature — namely depth and shoreline setback.

Absent new, well-substantiated environmental findings, expanding the current 2024 rule numeric thresholds risks moving ahead of the available science, and leans more on emotion.

I respectfully urge ANR to maintain the existing rule and preserve the integrity of the previously negotiated compromise. The record does not yet demonstrate sufficient scientific justification for these expanded restrictions. Until Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research supports the proposed changes, the 2025 provisions regarding the 500-foot setback from any object in the wake zone, the 100-acre minimum, and the 3,000-foot run should not move forward.

The 2024 rule continues to provide a balanced, science-based framework and should remain unchanged.

Thank you
Jess Waltzer

^ References noted above

- University of Minnesota — St. Anthony Falls Laboratory. Research on wake wave characteristics, energy, and attenuation relative to distance and depth.
- Marr et al., Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves (2022).
- Lake Waramaug Task Force, Shallow Water Environment Wave Impact Study (2024).

^^ additional references I would like to submit for consideration to confirm these Peer reviewed do not match the additional restrictions, and in fact confirm the current 2024 rule is sufficient per science available.

- Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings <https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf>

- Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015)Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-9888-8_10

I am a native Vermonter and resident of Thetford. My young family enjoys swimming, canoeing, and paddle boarding on Lake Fairlee all throughout the summer. We also enjoy observing all of the wildlife that make their home in and around the lake. The high energy waves created by wake boats are only enjoyable for the handful of people who are engaged in wakeboarding. Otherwise they are a nuisance and potential hazard for the hundreds (potentially thousands) of others enjoying the lake, whether they are at one of the 5 summer camps located on the lake, enjoying the waterfront at a private property, recreating at Treasure Island, or accessing the lake from the public boat launch.

Children playing in the shallows or swimming can be caught unawares by these large waves, which can be very upsetting as well as dangerous. People using small watercraft such as canoes, kayaks, paddle boards, sailboats, etc can also face capsizing. The waves can also damage moored and docked boats, as well as the docks and mooring lines themselves.

Wake boat waves also cause extensive aquatic ecosystem damage by eroding the shoreline, destroying shallow water habitats and uprooting aquatic vegetation. Fish spawning nests are disrupted, as well as waterfowl nesting near the shore like loons. Finally, they lower water quality by resuspending sediment, which reduces oxygen, further harming fish and plants and endangering the future health of the lake.

It seems obvious that the only people who benefit from wake boarding are the few people who participate in the sport. Otherwise the negative effects, of which I have only been able to detail briefly, are wide ranging. It seems illogical that this is even up for debate for Lake Fairlee, or any other Vermont lake for that matter.

I strongly support the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules restricting wake boats on small lake to protect its long-term health, safety, and shoreline integrity.

Wake boats are specifically engineered to generate unusually large, powerful waves through ballast and hull design. While that may be appropriate on very large bodies of water, on small inland lakes those waves do not have space to dissipate. Instead, they repeatedly strike the shoreline with force, accelerating erosion, damaging docks, undermining retaining walls, negatively impacting habitat, and degrading natural shoreline vegetation that protects water quality.

This is not just a property concern — it is an environmental one. Large artificial wakes stir up bottom sediments, increasing turbidity and releasing nutrients that contribute to algae blooms and declining water clarity. Over time, this threatens fish habitat, aquatic ecosystems, and the very recreational value that residents and visitors depend on. These effects are inconsistent with Vermont's long-standing policy goals of protecting water quality and maintaining the ecological integrity of inland waters.

There are also serious public safety impacts. Large wakes create hazardous conditions for swimmers, paddlers, anglers, and small-craft users who share these narrow waters. Our small inland lakes simply do not have the size or depth to safely accommodate high-energy wake activity alongside other uses. Large wake boat waves travel largely under water and are silent. They can unexpectedly overwhelm a swimmer, paddler, or boater. Wake boater's vision is significantly impaired by the lifting of the bow due to heavy ballast making it difficult for the driver to see and safety separate high-wake activity from other recreational uses. Most people who experience safety issues never report these conflicts. They don't know who to call to register a complaint, and they are wary of open conflict. Instead, they just choose to avoid the lake or avoid going out when wake boats are operating on the water.

This issue is about balance. Traditional boating, waterskiing, paddling, and quiet recreation can coexist. However, wake-enhanced boating places a disproportionate burden on shorelines, ecosystems, and other lake users. Many communities across the country have recognized this and adopted reasonable restrictions based on lake size and environmental protection. Protecting our small inland lakes means protecting a shared public resource — for current residents, future generations, and the wildlife that depends on it. For these reasons, I urge you to support strong limits on wake boats on small lakes.

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 rule changes and urge that science, peer-reviewed research, and verifiable data guide these important regulatory decisions.

My family and I have watched portions of the wakesports hearings together in order to better understand how this decision-making process is unfolding. One aspect that concerns me is that the current rule was only recently implemented, yet additional restrictions are already being proposed.

Based on what I have reviewed, these proposed changes appear to respond to petitions that do not clearly present supporting scientific evidence. I have always grounded my understanding and trust in fact-based research, which makes this process difficult to reconcile when that foundation appears to be lacking in the justification for these changes.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose:

the 3,000-foot straight run

the 500-foot setback from any object

the 100-acre minimum lake size

I encourage the Department to carefully review its own cited evidence and research. My understanding is that the same body of information that supported the 2024 rule is being referenced to justify these additional restrictions, yet the underlying scientific facts have not changed.

This pattern gives the appearance that the current proposal is being driven more by precautionary concerns and advocacy claims than by demonstrated, duplicated result, peer-reviewed scientific necessity. In the absence of new supporting science, it is difficult to understand how these claims have been elevated to the level of regulatory justification.

I respectfully urge the Department to give full and balanced consideration to all perspectives and to carefully re-examine both its prior findings and the current evidentiary record before advancing additional restrictions.

Sincerely,
Erin Budlong

Dear Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Board,

The Thetford Conservation Commission is writing to request adoption of the Use of Public Waters Rules changes proposed by the DEC, and that the rules be implemented as written, with no exceptions for single-boat operations or time-of-day flexibility. We believe the need to prohibit wakesports on Lake Fairlee is very clear and a matter of protecting public safety, fair access, and Lake Fairlee's unique ecosystem.

The four summer camps directly adjacent to the area currently used for wakesports on Lake Fairlee create a very high concentration of young children and inexperienced boaters. We must take their safety seriously; the proposed changes would increase the minimum wakesports zone (WSZ) size from 50 to 100 acres, and Lake Fairlee, with only a 90-acre WSZ, would become ineligible for wakesports. The Thetford Conservation Commission previously supported the Lake Fairlee petition to accomplish this prohibition and supports it again now. Additionally, the proposed rule requires wakesports to operate at least 500 feet from other lake users. This increase from only 200 feet will improve safety for users on lakes where wakesports will continue to be allowed.

Lake Fairlee's camps have safely offered water sports for over 100 years, and we need to protect the campers and the camps' ability to continue offering this recreation by implementing the rules as written, with no single-boat or time-of-day exceptions. The large wakes from a single wake boat would occupy a large area of the lake in the camps' "front yard," where they have enjoyed safe access for over a century. A single boat will reduce fair, safe access to this area, as the waves from a single boat still make the WSZ too dangerous for children and inexperienced boaters. Time-of-day exceptions will not address safety; people and boats are constantly on Lake Fairlee, especially at the camps. As a conservation commission, we want to protect access to and enjoyment of the lake because these are some of the best ways to educate and connect people to local nature, especially children, and these connections can create a lifelong desire to conserve and protect our scarce resources.

We are also very concerned with ecosystem, habitat, and wildlife conservation on Lake Fairlee and all Vermont lakes. Here again, we ask the department to follow research-backed guidelines and implement the proposed expanded safety buffer for nesting loons from 300 to 500 feet. Our local loons nest near Thetford's public beach on Lake Fairlee and, during their lifetime, utilize the entire lake. For the first time, this past summer, a second loon pair attempted to nest on the lake, this time, near the WSZ. They are expected to try again in the future. Loons are a wonderful facet of our local ecosystem that the entire community cherishes.

The spread of aquatic invasive species is also very concerning. For years, the Lake Fairlee Association has spent enormous funds (from donations and state grants) and volunteer hours to mitigate Eurasian milfoil. Allowing wake boat operation, where the bow is considerably raised, and the stern considerably lowered, increases the propellers' ability to shred and spread milfoil, which propagates through fragmentation. Wake boat operation on the lake would undermine past and future efforts to control this invasive species.

The Thetford Conservation Commission believes that the public should be able to enjoy our local natural resources, like Lake Fairlee, without the safety risks posed by wake boats. Additionally, the ecological impact of wake boats on Lake Fairlee, from affecting nesting loons to spreading Eurasian milfoil, would be terrible. We strongly support the proposed rule changes that more effectively balance

public safety and environmental conservation with wake boat use.

Sincerely,
Alicia Houk
Thetford, VT Conservation Commissioner

Please ban the use of wakeboards on lake fairlee! Disruptive to all!

My name is Gabe Woodard. I am a Vermont student. In school we are learning that good decisions should be based on science, facts, and listening to everyone.

I have been watching some of the wake meetings with my parents, and attended one in person, so I can learn how Vermont state works and rules get made.

One thing that confuses me is that the rule was just put in place less than a year ago, but now new changes are already being suggested after 1 year.

We are taught to trust science and real evidence and to be able to duplicate the results. It is hard to understand when changes seem to come from people that are asking for these changes however they do not clearly show the reason except that the boat is scary or not safe or they are afraid the boat will be on their lake one day.

I respectfully oppose these changes and ask that you leave the current rule.

I hope decisions will keep being based on science and fair listening to everyone.

Thank you for reading my comment.

Vermont's use of public water rules start with "Vermont's public waters are held in public trust for the benefit of all Vermonters and visitors, and public recreational uses are protected."

Considering wake boats make up less than 1% of the boats used on Vermont's waters, it seems unreasonable to at times hindered the 99% of other boats, never mind numerous swimmers for the sake of these few. It is known that the wave action can cause environmental damage, and the ballast tanks could harbor invasive species. Plus there is no other use that hinders the enjoyment of others the way wake boating does.

Our lakes are often the key to economic well being of many of our towns and certainly tourism is key to our state.

Given all of the above – DEC should strengthen the rules of use for wake boats as proposed.

It is easier and cheaper to prevent or avoid doing any environmental damage than to spend the time treating or correcting it once it has occurred.

Please strengthen the rules and allow the majority of Vermonters to enjoy our lakes and ponds without the fear of a sudden rogue wake.

Hi My name is Steve Brownlee, I am the owner of Umiak Outdoor Outfitters, of Stowe and Richmond, VT. We operate a canoe, kayak, and SUP rental operation on the Waterbury Reservoir, along with several other rental operations in northern Vermont. Umiak Outiftters is also Nerthern Vermopnts largest retailer of paddlesport craft. We serve over 10.000 Vermontsers and visitors each season. Umiak Outfitters, its customer, and myself has our full support regarding the recrafting of the new Use of Public Waters Rules that they feel necessary to accommodate protection of our waters.

Steven Brownlee
Umiak Outiftters
802-253-2317
www.umiak.com

In the summer my wife and I swim for exercise almost every day, usually a mile or two. Often we swim from the public swimming area at Treasure Island on Lake Fairlee. I have seen mothers rush to protect their toddlers from incoming waves, boats bashed against docks, inexperienced children terrified by the waves while they are learning to canoe, kayak, paddle board and sail. I have struggled to gain the attention of the operator of an approaching boat operating in "wake" mode when his bow was so high that he/she can not see over it and us in the water even while we are towing high visibility flotation devices behind us in the water. I have even been reprimanded because they didn't see us. The safety of all of these users is impacted by the operation of wake boats. Wake boats generate storm sized waves of the kind you might expect on lake Champlain. They have no place on a small lake where all of the other users may impacted. While wake boats are in operation many of us can not safely use the lake.

I am submitting this comment in opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes. I am not approaching this from an emotional standpoint, but from day-to-day on-the-water experience working as a marine service technician who water tests boats regularly throughout the season.

My job puts me on Vermont lakes frequently in real operating conditions — not in theory, but in practice. I run vessels for diagnostics, post-service testing, and performance verification across different lake types and depths. Because of that, I tend to look at these proposals through the lens of what is actually happening on the water versus what is being anticipated.

When ANR stated on May 1, 2024 that the existing wakeboat rule was science-based and reflected Vermont's shared interests, that aligned with what many of us in the marine field understood. The 2024 rule focused on the two factors that consistently matter in real-world operation: depth and distance from shore. From a practical standpoint, that made sense.

What gives me pause about the current proposal is that I am not seeing new, clearly demonstrated environmental data showing the existing framework is failing. Instead, what appears to have grown is the level of concern and advocacy asking for additional restrictions.

I also note that several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently operating on those lakes. From a technician's perspective, that suggests the regulatory conversation may be moving away from measured conditions and toward managing for a potential future scenario.

In most technical fields, we tighten standards when performance data shows a documented issue. We generally do not broaden system-wide restrictions based primarily on what might occur at some point down the road without supporting field evidence.

I want to specifically flag concern with the proposed direction of Section 3.7.

From the service side of the marine industry, clarity and consistency in rules are extremely important. We are often the ones helping customers understand where and how they can legally and responsibly operate their boats.

As written, the expanded flexibility in Section 3.7 appears to allow wakesports eligibility to shift through ongoing administrative decisions tied to management activities or research considerations. My concern is that without very clear guardrails, this could create a moving target for compliance.

When rules become difficult to track or predict, it creates confusion not just for boat owners but also for technicians, dealers, and enforcement personnel trying to provide accurate guidance.

I fully support targeted lake management when there is documented environmental need. However, open-ended discretion can unintentionally lead to uncertainty and uneven expectations across seasons.

From what I see both in the field and in the available materials, the 2024 rule already addressed the main physical factors that influence wake interaction — particularly operating depth and shoreline setback.

Without new, well-supported environmental findings, expanding the numeric thresholds feels

disconnected from what many of us are actually observing on the water day to day.

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend that ANR:

- keep the current 2024 rule in place, and
- take a careful second look at how Section 3.7 would function in real-world implementation

unless and until new, clearly demonstrated environmental data shows a need for change.

Thank you for the work you are doing and for considering input from those of us who are on Vermont waters regularly in a professional capacity.

Chase

I am writing because I am concerned about Fairfield Pond in Franklin County. Apparently, as things currently sit, it is one of the ponds that will allow wake boats. It is a long narrow pond, and even if wake boat were to be able to operate in the center of the pond, it would be very disruptive to a small lake that has busy usage for paddle boards, canoes kayaks, skiers, and swimmers. I am just reaching out to State my opinion that Fairfield Pond would be an inappropriate place for wake boats. The other issue is that there is very very little parking area and lake access for boats going in and out. Thank you for opening this topic to public comments. Please Vermont's small ponds and lakes, safe and enjoyable for quiet recreation. Thank you.

As the Loon Monitor for Lake Harvey since 2011, I feel strongly that prohibition of Wakesports on Lake Harvey is the best outcome for our two pair of nesting loons. It is unlikely that a wakeboat can operate in the map outlined in DEC material without moving into the nursery territory of our southern pair of loons. In addition, previous experience in recent years indicates that the likelihood that a boat in Wakesports mode will stay in the area outlined on the map is slim. Please remove Lake Harvey from the list of approved lakes for Wakesports. Thank you for your consideration of this opinion.

I respectfully submit this comment in opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes.

By background, I am not a wakesports participant and do not operate a powerboat. My professional training is in accounting, where decisions are expected to be grounded in verifiable data, consistent methodology, and documented need. I am also someone who values Vermont's tradition of allowing people to responsibly share public resources.

For that reason, I have tried to review this proposal through a fact-based lens rather than through personal preference or emotional reaction.

ANR stated on May 1, 2024 that the existing wakeboat rule was science-based and reflected Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation. Based on the materials currently available, I have not seen new confirmed environmental evidence demonstrating that the 2024 framework is no longer sufficient.

What stands out to me is not the emergence of new science, but rather the absence of updated scientific confirmation supporting the additional restrictions now proposed. In fact, several well-established, independently vetted studies frequently cited in technical discussions — including work by Girod & Goudey, MacFarlane, and Daeger — continue to reinforce the importance of depth and shoreline distance as the primary physical considerations. These studies do not appear to support the expanded numeric thresholds currently under consideration.

From an analytical standpoint, when a regulatory structure has already been described by the Agency as science-based, the burden for further expansion typically rests on demonstrating new, material evidence. I am not seeing that evidentiary step clearly documented in the current proposal.

I am also mindful that several of the petitions referenced in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not presently operating on those lakes. From a policy perspective, this suggests the conversation may be shifting from managing observed conditions toward regulating based on anticipated future presence.

In financial oversight and risk management, we are cautious about expanding controls in the absence of demonstrated exposure. Preventative thinking has value, but durable policy generally requires a clear link between restriction and documented need.

***** I would also like to raise a specific concern regarding the proposed direction of Section 3.7. From a governance and accountability standpoint, policies work best when they are transparent, predictable, and tied to clearly defined criteria. As currently structured, Section 3.7 appears to introduce broader administrative flexibility to adjust wakesports eligibility based on evolving management considerations.

My concern is not with legitimate, evidence-supported lake management actions. Rather, it is that without clearly articulated thresholds, timelines, and review standards, this structure could allow incremental restriction of access without the same level of formal, science-grounded rulemaking that produced the original 2024 compromise.

For members of the public, including those of us who simply value fair and consistent public policy, regulatory stability matters.

Even as someone who does not personally participate in wakesports, I believe Vermont's public waters should continue to be managed through careful, evidence-based decision making that respects both environmental protection and reasonable shared use.

At this time, I do not see new, clearly demonstrated scientific confirmation that would warrant expanding beyond the 2024 framework that ANR previously described as science-based.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage ANR to:

maintain the existing 2024 rule, and take a careful, transparent look at the evidentiary basis and guardrails surrounding the proposed changes to Section 3.7

unless and until new, well-supported environmental findings clearly demonstrate the need for further restrictions

Thank you
Kat

I am writing to express my deep concern about wake boats on Lake Morey. It is a small lake with a long history of recreation and conservation, it is the backbone of the town economy, and is currently ecologically fragile due to recent cyanobacteria infestation (toxic algae blooms), and subsequent alum treatment for such. Wake boats put all of these important things in jeopardy, and it is vital that the State of Vermont act to protect the lake's ecosystems and community.

My concerns are specifically:

1) The health of the lake. Lake Morey recently underwent a very costly alum treatment (partially funded by the state) to suppress cyanobacteria, which is extremely toxic to humans, pets and fish. The depth to which wake boats churn the water is disruptive to the thin barrier which encapsulates the toxic sediment, and could render the treatment ineffective in short order. Allowing wake boats is at cross purposes with Vermont's recent work to protect the health of lake residents.

2) Safety. The majority of lake and town residents and visitors come to the lake to pursue traditional lake recreation including swimming, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, sailing and paddlboarding -- all non-powerboat activities. These activities have historically been done in relative harmony with traditional ski boats and pontoon boats, but wake boats are a completely different story. The size of the wakes created by wake boats are many times the height of the wakes created by traditional ski boats, and can topple smaller watercrafts like sailboats and paddleboards, not to mention small children wading and learning to swim in the shallows. In addition, the mechanics of wake boats cause the bow to sit much higher above the water, with the stern set down into the water. This significantly and dangerously limits the driver's visibility, causing danger to swimmers and animals in the water, as well as people engaged in other lake activities.

3) Preservation of the lake environment. The considerably larger waves produced by wake boats not only endanger people and animals on the lake at the time of use, but the waves crashing on shore cause long term damage including the erosion of the shoreline, destruction of loon nests, damage to docks and boats, and disrupt the feeding habits of fish, loons and other lake animals.

I strongly urge the State of Vermont to prevent wake sports on Lake Morey altogether.

I'm writing to support the effort to ban wakesports from small Vermont lakes. I understand that you have already received many scientific studies showing how destructive they can be to the ecology of small lakes, including wildlife; and that you have many testimonials about wake boats' disruption of the joy and serenity that small Vermont lakes have given to generations of Vermonters and visitors. The negative effects to the ecology and pleasure may also have irreparable economic disruptions.

I now live in Maryland, but I grew up in Burlington, and have remained in very close touch with family and friends throughout Vermont. I still proudly consider Vermont as my heart-home. I visit whenever I can, and might eventually move back.

I often tell people who have never been to Vermont that summer there is PARADISE. And being at -- or on -- a small lake -- that's an upper level Heaven. Swimming, floating, sailing, paddling; listening to loons; observing other wildlife; laughing with friends and new just-met friends -- pure joy! However, wakesports change everything. The surface of the water is no longer safe and requires hypervigilance, and the noise is disturbing. Then it's more like the fast, loud, hustle-and-bustle of a city. It totally transforms small-lake experience.

And then I also feel sad for the future of the small lakes, including Lake Fairlee, seeing costly shoreline erosion, and knowing the damage to the environment / wildlife is likely irreparable if wakesports become part of the permanent culture there.

We humans are supposed to be the "designated drivers," protecting our shared, fragile Planet. And we yearn for freedom, but we must remember that we share space and resources, and exercising individual freedom should not cause harm.

I am so proud that Vermonters have long had a commitment to be responsible stewards of the land, the waterways, humans, wildlife, and more -- including being early adopters of wide-spread recycling, composting, and land-use considerations. There is such understanding there that preserving the environment in perpetuity is not only the right and safe thing to do, but provides economic assurance that Vermont will continue to attract visitors searching for Pristine Paradise.

Please keep Vermont's small lakes safe!

I strongly oppose any ruling changes to the wake boat regulations. Being on the lake one thing I have noticed is the amount of time these boats are actually surfing or wakeboarding is very little. It is not a sport where anyone could spend hours performing wake sport activities. To go through all these rules that people want to change every year, how much time are we going to spend pleading cases on something that is not even enforceable at this point in time and probably not in the near future. There is no reason everyone cannot share our lakes together with respect for one another.

Vermont's current rule is already among the most restrictive in the country. Vermont is known as a kind and fair state and this is against these values. Raising the minimum lake size from 50 to 100 contiguous acres along with the new administrative pathway in Section 3.7 would further limit access without Vermont-specific scientific justification. Our lakes have long been managed with an emphasis on predictability and fairness, and this proposal undermines that balance.

There is no evidence that 100 acres represents an ecological threshold or reflects new environmental findings. The existing 50-acre standard was established through a thorough rulemaking process that found it sufficient for safe, sustainable use. Doubling it now, without new verified data, appears arbitrary and disproportionately impacts a single user group rather than advancing environmental protection. I have heard that some lakes are using safety as this determination. I would challenge this as ALL users have been able to use the lake in a fair and safe way.

Restricting smaller lakes will also concentrate wakesport activity onto far fewer water bodies, increasing safety risks, user conflicts, and ecological pressure.

As a mother of 2 boys, I would implore you to not make changes due to unsubstantiated claims and fear. We all should be able to use the lake and the current rules allow us to do this.

As a father of two young boys who are active and love spending time outdoors, I care deeply about preserving fair and responsible access to Vermont's waters. I am writing to oppose the proposed "Normal Use" definition that would classify wakeboats as a new or fundamentally different activity. Advancing technology does not make wake surfing a new use. It is simply an evolution of long-standing boating recreation that has existed on Vermont lakes for generations. Treating it as something novel or inherently problematic misrepresents what the activity actually is and unfairly singles out one group of boaters.

It is also important to recognize that during both the 2024 and 2025 boating seasons, there were no reported violations related to wakeboats. This is strong evidence that the current rules are working as intended. They are balanced, fair, and effective at addressing the concerns that have been raised. All people should have access to Vermont's waters. Restricting a lawful, well-regulated activity based on fear or assumptions, rather than data, undermines the inclusive and equitable approach that has long guided Vermont's water management. With no violations and no demonstrated harm under the existing framework, there is no justification for redefining wakeboats in a way that limits access. I respectfully urge the Agency to maintain the current rules and reject the proposed "Normal Use" definition. The system we have today is working, and it allows families like mine and many others to enjoy Vermont's lakes safely and responsibly.

I submitted comments sent directly to Laura Dlugolecki yesterday, February 19th, unaware that there was a form to fill out. I will resubmit my letter to the preferred email address above and would appreciate your accepting it a few minutes after the official deadline. Thank you.

I have been a part of the processes to help keep lake Harvey clean, cool, healthy, and to prevent lakeshore erosion. In reading all the literature and studies we now have regarding Wakesports and their deterioration of the quality of the lakes in the Midwest that have allowed wakesports for years, I firmly believe this is bound to have negative effects on our beautiful resource here in Barnet. Many lakes in the Midwest are now banning them too late. I support the addition of Lake Harvey to the exemption list of lakes that are large enough for wakeboats. Our lake is too small and, frankly, too precious to be an experiment. We, as a town, along with funding from the State of Vermont have worked for years to keep aquatic nuisance species out of our lake. Why open up the possibility through wakeboats?

I am adamantly opposed to increased wakesports on lake Willoughby.

Dear ANR/ Lakes & Ponds Program Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment on the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments. After reviewing the proposed changes, the rulemaking documents, the submitted petitions, and the public comments supporting additional restrictions, I respectfully submit the following.

I oppose the proposed additions of:

the 100-acre lake threshold

the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement

the expanded interpretation of a 500-foot buffer from “any object” within the wakezone

Normal Use Definition

Section 3.7 and 4.3 for management project municipalities

and I support maintaining the 2024 rule as written, including the existing shoreline and dock buffer framework.

In reviewing the materials cited by those requesting further restrictions, the primary scientific sources referenced are research from the University of Minnesota and work conducted at the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory. These studies examine boat-generated wake characteristics such as wave height, energy, and how wakes attenuate with distance.

However, the way these scientific findings are being translated into the proposed regulatory thresholds introduces important differences between what the science evaluates and how the rule uses those numbers.

Shape

500-Foot Buffer From “Any Object”

The Minnesota research evaluates how wakes diminish over distance, particularly in relation to shorelines, docks, and other vessels. The studies focus on wake attenuation, energy dissipation, and the role of depth and distance from shore.

The proposed rule expands this into a requirement that wakeboats remain 500 feet from “any object,” which functionally creates a wide operational exclusion zone around a vessel. The research cited does not define “object,” does not analyze swimmers, buoys, or wildlife markers as variables, and does not recommend a 360-degree exclusion zone within a wakesports area.

The science describes attenuation relative to shorelines and boats. The “any object” interpretation represents a policy expansion beyond the study context.

Shape

3,000-Foot Straight-Run Requirement

The 3,000-foot figure appears in discussions as a typical wakesports ride length — a description of boating practice, not an environmental response metric. Wake science evaluates wave energy, propagation, depth, and distance from shore. It does not evaluate ecological impact relative to how long a boat travels in a straight line.

No study links sediment movement, erosion, or habitat effects to uninterrupted run length. The dimension is used in spatial visualization and operational descriptions, not as a hydrodynamic or ecological threshold.

Shape

100-Acre Lake Requirement

The 100-acre figure is derived from geometric modeling of space needed for a modeled run length and wake width. Wake research identifies environmental impact drivers as distance from shore, wave energy, water depth, and frequency of exposure. Lake surface area itself does not alter how a wake is generated or how it attenuates.

The Minnesota studies do not include acreage as a tested variable and do not identify a lake-size threshold at which environmental impacts change.

The argument being presented to Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and DEC — including by Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds — asserts that wakesports should be classified as a “non-normal use” under Vermont’s Public Waters framework because modern wakeboats, in their current form, did not exist prior to January 1, 1993.

This interpretation mischaracterizes both the activity at issue and the intent of the statute.

The relevant use is towed watersports conducted by inboard motorboats, an activity that clearly predates 1993.

Sincerely,

Julia

I am opposed to wakesports on the lake. I support the proposal but it does not go far enough.

I respectfully submit this comment in opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes.

I work daily as a dock slip manager, coordinating seasonal slip holders, transient boaters, and general waterfront operations. My perspective comes from hands-on experience managing lake access, helping customers understand Vermont's boating rules, and observing how policies function in the real world over the course of a full season.

Because of my role, I try to look at these proposals through a practical and fact-based lens rather than through emotion or assumptions about how the rules might feel. Clear, stable, and evidence-supported regulations are essential for those of us who work directly with the boating public.

ANR stated on May 1, 2024 that the existing wakeboat rule was science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests. From an operational standpoint at the docks, the 2024 rule provided a framework that customers could understand and comply with. It addressed the core factors — depth and distance from shore — in a way that was workable in day-to-day marina operations.

What concerns me about the current proposal is that I have not seen new, clearly demonstrated environmental data showing that the 2024 rule is failing. Instead, what I am seeing is increased advocacy calling for additional restrictions.

I also note that several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently operating on those lakes. From the dock management perspective, this suggests the regulatory focus may be shifting from managing documented conditions to anticipating future scenarios that may or may not materialize.

In marina operations, we typically adjust procedures when we see a consistent, measurable issue on the docks or in the channel — not simply because there is concern something could occur in the future. Practical management works best when it responds to observed conditions.

Specific Concern — Section 3.7

I would like to specifically raise concern about the proposed direction of Section 3.7.

In my role, consistency and predictability in the rules are extremely important. Slip holders plan seasons in advance. Transient boaters rely on clear guidance. Marina staff need to be able to explain the rules with confidence.

As proposed, Section 3.7 appears to introduce broader administrative flexibility to change wakesports eligibility based on evolving management considerations. My concern is that without clearly defined guardrails and objective triggers, this could create uncertainty for boaters and for those of us responsible for helping them stay compliant.

I fully support targeted lake management actions when they are supported by documented environmental need. However, policies that can shift frequently or without clear thresholds become difficult to communicate and implement at the dock level.

From what I see working directly with the boating public, the existing 2024 rule already addressed the primary operational and environmental considerations that customers were working to understand and follow.

Without new, well-supported environmental findings, expanding the numeric thresholds risks creating confusion and moving beyond what has been clearly demonstrated as necessary.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage ANR to:

maintain the existing 2024 rule, and

carefully review the real-world implementation impacts and guardrails within Section 3.7

unless and until new, clearly demonstrated environmental data supports further change.

Thank you for your time and for the work you do to steward Vermont's public waters.

I have been a landowner on Lake Fairlee for over 10 years with my wife, Kendra Chencus. We chose Lake Fairlee for its natural beauty, water quality, and tranquil surroundings. Our family uses the lake for rowing, swimming, paddle boarding, kayaking, sailing, water skiing and tubing. We especially enjoy a family outing in the motorboat to slowly cruise the lake before sundown. We love the wildlife in and around the lake. We have tried to be good stewards of the lake by planting dozens and dozens of trees and shrubs to promote shade and wildlife habitat and to prevent runoff into the lake.

Our motorboat is relatively small (18 feet) and appropriately powered for the size of the lake. When we use it, we are very aware of our neighbors on the lake, the size of our wake, and our speed. I consider wake boats to be a particularly good example of the "tyranny of the minority" - where a small group of users has a disproportionately huge and negative impact on the vast majority of other users of the lake. Wake boats are designed and their entire reason for being is to create a monstrous, surf-able wave. Good fun for the user but look out and take cover for everyone else. I cannot imagine owning and using such a boat on Lake Fairlee, where my presence would wreck everyone else's enjoyment of the lake. I have personally witnessed paddleboarders knocked off their boards and kayakers swamped and flipped by the waves from a wake boat. My wife was knocked off her feet while trying to launch her kayak on our shorefront, seriously injuring her ankle in the process. Waves from a wake boat have been so high that they have knocked the wooden floorboards out of place on our dock. The waves crash onto shore, stirring up the sediment and promoting erosion. Boats jerk violently on their dock lines and swim docks pitch and buck against their mooring lines. Basically, all regular use of the lake has to cease while the wake boat is in the area. It might as well be Jaws.

Even if the wake boat were alone on the lake, its use has a profoundly negative effect on the environment. Sediments are stirred up, water quality is diminished, invasive plants are spread, nesting loons and other wildlife are disturbed, and the shorefront is undercut and eroded. Ocean-sized waves have no place on a small lake in the woods.

In sum, wake boating on a small lake is one of the most selfish acts you can do. Have more consideration for your neighbors and the environment and take your boat to a larger lake, please. I know that we want to accommodate as wide a range of uses on the lake as possible, but this seems like common sense and a complete no-brainer. Lake Fairlee is just too small.

One other thought. Lake Fairlee is not a natural mecca for wake boats. To my knowledge, it does not attract wake boats from afar. It is way too small and narrow. To my knowledge, the only persons regularly using a wake boat on Lake Fairlee are two families that own property on the lake. Anyone else seeking a fun day on the water in their wake boat will likely be looking elsewhere. As a result, the loss to the wake boating community at large is minor. Furthermore, the lack of wake boating would not cause us to forego some economic boom for the town of Fairlee, nor would we be depriving the county or its inhabitants of some wonderful benefit. On the contrary, we would be preserving Lake Fairlee as a tranquil and welcoming place, as it always has been for generations of families before wake boats were invented, and for generations of campers at the five camps on the shores of the lake, which each year attract hundreds of campers and employees.

Lake Fairlee is a special place. This is a very modest step to keep it that way.

Thank you for your consideration.

I am writing to express concern with — and opposition to — the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes.

I manage a seasonal boat rental operation that serves a wide mix of Vermont residents and visiting families. My perspective comes less from policy theory and more from the day-to-day reality of helping the public safely access and enjoy Vermont's waters while staying within the rules. While at Woodards Marine we required every operator to have their boating license (no matter their age), it concerns me that the public is still learning about old rules and the new updated 2024 rules have not been adapted to the handbook or testing, therefore sending new boaters and renters onto the water without this law abiding rule.

From an operations standpoint, one of the most important things we rely on is regulatory stability. When rules are clear and grounded in well-understood standards, we can train staff properly, educate renters responsibly, and help ensure good behavior on the water.

When ANR stated in May 2024 that the existing wakeboat rule was science-based and reflective of Vermont's shared interests, that provided a level of confidence for businesses like ours. The 2024 framework gave us something concrete to work from — particularly the focus on depth and shoreline distance, which are straightforward to explain and monitor in the field.

What gives me concern now is that I am not seeing new, clearly demonstrated environmental evidence showing that the 2024 rule is not working. Instead, the conversation appears to be shifting toward additional precautionary restrictions.

I also note that several of the petitions referenced in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently present on those lakes. From the rental side of the industry, that signals the policy discussion may be moving away from addressing documented conditions and toward regulating based on potential future use.

In the rental business, we are constantly balancing safety, access, and responsible use. When we tighten procedures, it is typically because we have observed a consistent issue — not simply because demand might increase at some point. That same measured approach is important in statewide policy.

I would also like to specifically raise concern about the proposed direction of Section 3.7.

Rental operations depend heavily on predictability. We train seasonal staff, develop printed guidance, and communicate expectations to customers weeks and months in advance. If eligibility for wakesports can shift through ongoing administrative determinations without clearly defined triggers or timelines, it becomes significantly harder for front-line businesses to keep customers properly informed.

I fully support targeted lake management when supported by clear environmental need. However, policies that can change in a less structured or less transparent way create operational challenges and increase the risk of unintentional non-compliance by otherwise well-meaning users.

From a business and visitor experience standpoint, Vermont benefits when rules are stable, clearly justified, and easy to communicate.

More broadly, I believe the 2024 rule represented a workable middle ground that allowed responsible

recreation while addressing the primary environmental considerations identified at the time.

Without new, well-substantiated environmental findings, expanding the numeric thresholds risks moving beyond what has been clearly demonstrated as necessary and may create unnecessary complexity for those of us working directly with the boating public.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage ANR to:

maintain the existing 2024 rule, and

carefully evaluate the real-world business and communication impacts of the proposed flexibility within Section 3.7

unless and until new, clearly demonstrated environmental data supports further change.

Thank you for considering input from those of us working on the front lines of public lake access.

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes and offer this comment as someone who lives directly on a Vermont lake and experiences daily wave activity throughout the boating season.

My perspective is based on real observation over time, not on assumptions or secondhand reports. I am on the shoreline regularly and pay close attention to how different types of boat traffic affect nearshore conditions.

From what I observe, there is significant wave activity on busy summer days from a variety of vessels. In particular, I do not see a meaningful difference between a typical recreational boat operating closer to shore — especially one not maintaining the current 200-foot distance — and a wakesurf boat operating in deeper water and farther offshore in accordance with the existing 2024 rule.

In fact, afternoon cruising traffic with multiple passengers, particularly when operating closer to shore, often produces noticeable wave action along my shoreline. By comparison, when wakesurf boats are operating where the current rule places them — in deeper water and set back from shore — the impact at my property line is not distinguishable in any consistent or measurable way.

Because of this lived experience, I believe it is important that policy decisions remain grounded in Vermont-specific, fact-based research rather than perception alone.

ANR previously stated on May 1, 2024 that the existing wakeboat rule was science-based and reflected Vermonters' shared interests. That rule was understood to be the negotiated middle ground and it already addresses the key operational factors of depth and shoreline distance.

At this time, I have not seen Vermont-based scientific research demonstrating that the current rule is insufficient or that the additional proposed restrictions are necessary. Until such Vermont-specific, fact-backed environmental research is completed and clearly supports further change, I believe the existing 2024 framework should remain in place.

I am also concerned about the proposed flexibility within Section 3.7. I personally have completed stone seawall in front of my house, and I would hate for the general people against wakeboats to use this as ammunition to restrict a user from utilizing the waters indefinitely.

As a lakefront resident, consistency and predictability in lake use rules matter. The proposed structure appears to allow wakesports eligibility to shift through administrative determinations tied to management activities or research considerations.

My concern is not with legitimate, clearly supported environmental protections. Rather, it is that without firm, evidence-based triggers and transparent standards, this could allow incremental restrictions without the same level of statewide scientific review that supported the original rule.

I care deeply about the long-term health of Vermont's lakes and fully support science-based stewardship. At the same time, changes that affect lawful lake use should be supported by Vermont-specific, clearly demonstrated environmental evidence.

Until the State completes and presents its own fact-based research showing that additional restrictions are warranted, I respectfully believe the 2024 rule — which was described as science-based and was the product of compromise — should remain in place.

Thank you for your time and for your continued work to protect Vermont's lakes for everyone who values them.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this response. I have been a resident at Harvey's Lake for the past 13 years, but my connection to the Lake dates back to my great grandmother, who owned property at the north end. In fact, our home in West Barnet belonged to my grandmother; we bought it from the Town in 2010 and had it moved to its current location and restored. I have a deep connection with the Lake and the Lake community, and I'm convinced that the introduction of wakeboats would result in immediate, and irreparable harm to the Lake and its ecosystem, and would threaten the enjoyment that so many of us get from the time we are able to spend there. I don't offer this comment because I dislike wakeboats or similar activities - I have been on wakeboats and they are undeniably fun. But Harvey's Lake is simply too small to allow this kind of activity. It cannot co-exist with the community's use and enjoyment of the Lake.

I grew up enjoying several of Vermont's beautiful lakes, so this matter is especially important and meaningful to me for several reasons which I detail below.

I am writing in strong support of the Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed revisions to the Use of Public Waters Rules. These updates appropriately address growing concerns about wakesurfing's impacts on public safety, shoreline erosion, lake ecosystems, and they are vital to protecting Vermont's shared public waters.

I support the proposed requirement that wakesports be limited to lakes with a minimum of 100 contiguous acres and a 3,000-foot run, and I urge the DEC to adopt this standard without exception. Lakes that cannot meet this threshold simply do not provide adequate space for high-displacement wakesurf boats to operate safely alongside swimmers, paddlers, anglers, rowers, and traditional boaters.

I also strongly support expanding the required buffer distance from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users, shorelines, and in-water structures. Modern wakesurf boats are specifically designed to create large, powerful wakes that remain forceful far beyond 200 feet. These waves can reach swimmers or shorelines suddenly and with enough energy to cause significant harm, even when operators believe they are following existing rules.

Public safety is a critical concern. Large wakes can unexpectedly overwhelm swimmers—particularly children—and destabilize kayaks, canoes, paddle boarders, fishing boats, and small sailboats. In addition, wakesurf boats often operate with heavy ballast concentrated toward the stern, lifting the bow and limiting the operator's forward visibility. This reduced line of sight greatly increases the danger of collisions with people in the water or low-profile vessels.

The environmental impacts of these wakes are significant. When large wakes enter shallow water, they stir up bottom sediments, uproot aquatic plants, and degrade fish habitat. This disturbance increases water turbidity, reduces water clarity, and can contribute to algae blooms by releasing nutrients trapped in sediments. These blooms harm wildlife, pets, and people and diminish the overall health and quality of Vermont's lakes.

Shoreline erosion caused by repeated high-energy wakes is another serious issue. These wakes accelerate erosion, damage docks, and undermine natural shorelines. They also threaten sensitive wildlife habitat. Loon nests, for example, are often built only inches above calm water levels, making them especially vulnerable to flooding from large wakes during nesting season. This has proven especially true on Lake Raponda, where I grew up enjoying many summer days on the water.

Because of wakesurfing's impacts on public safety, shoreline erosion, lake ecosystems, and vital protection of Vermont's shared public waters, I strongly support the Department of Environmental Conservation's proposed revisions to the Use of Public Waters Rules for this generation, and to ensure generations to come may enjoy the same activities safely.

Sincerely,
Laura Widness

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes and offer this comment from the perspective of an emergency physician whose daily work depends entirely on evidence-based decision making.

In emergency medicine, lives depend on our ability to distinguish between anecdote and validated data. We do not diagnose or treat patients based on what is most concerning to bystanders or even to the patient's family. We rely on clinical evidence, established protocols, and measurable findings. Without that discipline, outcomes would suffer.

For that reason, I approach this rulemaking through the same lens.

ANR stated on May 1, 2024 that the existing wakeboat rule was science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests. That determination is significant. In any evidence-driven field, once a policy is established as data-supported, the burden for change typically rests on the presentation of new, clearly demonstrated findings.

At present, I have not seen Vermont-specific environmental research showing that the 2024 framework is failing or insufficient. Instead, what appears to have increased is the level of concern and advocacy requesting additional restrictions.

It is also notable that several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently operating on those lakes. From a risk assessment standpoint, that suggests the regulatory posture may be shifting from managing demonstrated conditions to attempting to prevent a hypothetical future scenario.

In medicine, we are careful not to escalate treatment without clinical indicators that justify doing so. Acting without sufficient evidence can introduce unintended consequences and erode confidence in the decision-making process.

The existing 2024 rule already addressed the primary physical variables identified in the literature — particularly water depth and shoreline setback. Without new, well-substantiated environmental findings specific to Vermont waters, expanding the numeric thresholds risks moving beyond what the science currently supports.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge ANR to maintain the existing 2024 rule and to ensure that any future changes remain firmly grounded in clearly demonstrated, fact-based environmental research.

Thank you for your time and for your continued stewardship of Vermont's public waters.

Thank you
Josh Harris
Rutland, Vermont

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes and offer this comment from the perspective of both a researcher by training and an outdoor sports professional who spends significant time on Vermont waters and winter venues.

In my professional life as a PhD, I am trained to evaluate claims based on methodology, reproducibility, and strength of evidence. At home, I am married to an emergency physician whose work depends on making life-critical decisions grounded strictly in objective data. Between our two professions, we share a deep respect for disciplined, fact-based decision making.

For that reason, I have tried to review this proposal carefully and without emotion.

ANR stated on May 1, 2024 that the existing wakeboat rule was science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation. From both a research and practical sports perspective, that conclusion carries weight. The 2024 rule appeared to reflect a negotiated middle ground informed by the available science at the time.

Since then, I have not identified new Vermont-specific environmental research demonstrating that the existing framework is insufficient. What appears to have evolved more rapidly is the level of concern and advocacy requesting additional restrictions.

I am also mindful that several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently operating on those lakes. From a research standpoint, that suggests the policy discussion may be moving from response to measured conditions toward anticipatory regulation.

In both scientific research and athletic coaching, we adjust protocols when performance data clearly demonstrates the need — not simply when concern increases. In ski racing, for example, we modify training plans based on measurable athlete performance and course data, not on speculation about what might occur in future races. That same discipline is important in environmental policy.

I would also like to express concern regarding the proposed direction of Section 3.7.

From both a research governance perspective and an instructional standpoint, policies function best when they are transparent, stable, and tied to clearly defined criteria. The proposed flexibility within Section 3.7 appears to allow wakesports eligibility to shift through ongoing administrative determinations tied to management activities or research considerations.

My concern is not with legitimate, evidence-supported lake management. Rather, it is that without clearly articulated thresholds, timelines, and evidentiary standards, this structure could allow incremental restriction without the same level of rigorous statewide review that supported the original 2024 rule.

Consistency and clarity matter — both in research environments and in the field when working with athletes, families, and the public.

From both a scientific and practical outdoor recreation perspective, the existing 2024 rule already addresses the primary physical factors identified in the literature, particularly water depth and shoreline setback.

Until Vermont-specific, well-substantiated environmental research clearly demonstrates that additional restrictions are necessary, I believe the current framework — which ANR previously described as science-based — should remain in place.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage ANR to:
maintain the existing 2024 rule, and
carefully reevaluate the evidentiary basis and guardrails associated with the proposed changes to Section 3.7

unless and until new, clearly demonstrated Vermont supported and certified environmental data supports further change.

Thank you for your time

Lindsay Harris

Our family has had a camp on Lake Parker for over 35 years. We swim, kayak and paddle board; there are no resident wake boats on Parker, and we love the relative quiet we have had. Please enact the rule changes as presented for the 2026 boating season.

I strongly oppose these changes. In my opinion wakeboats can be considered SAFER than other boats that pull skiers or tubers....the surfer is closer to the boat thus not out in open space and the boats go much slower than a ski boat. My family has spent many years enjoying this sport and it has promoted strong family ties. We are extremely safe, conscientious boaters and we have instilled these same values in our children. we own property on the lake and the ice does far more damage to the shoreline than any waves that may be caused by wakeboats.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I especially support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on them. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

Wake sports have no place on Vermont's lakes. These activities churn up shorelines, damage fragile ecosystems, increase erosion, and disrupt wildlife, all while diminishing the quiet, natural character that makes our lakes so special. Vermont's waters are shared public resources, not playgrounds for high-impact recreation that benefits a few at the expense of many. For the sake of water quality, shoreline protection, and preserving the peaceful experience residents and visitors value, wake sports should be banned on our lakes.

Please take extra precautions to ban wake boats or make the absolute minimum distance from shore 1000 feet! It is essential for the health and future of our beloved lake!

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion, as these changes prioritize safety and lake health. Ensuring the pristine quality of so many Vermont lakes should be a preeminent concern for all.

Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run) and expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet is good policy for now - for all our future.

I reside on Lake Morey in the summer. My preference is to not allow wakeboats to generate massive waves that negatively impact docks, moored boats and tied up boats on docks, paddlers (canoes, paddle boards), swimmers, vulnerable people playing in the water (especially young children and older folks), nesting loons and ducks. Etc, etc.

Calm days invite many people to enjoy the lake in a variety of ways and it can be very frightening and/or dangerous when unexpected and unpredictable massive waves come at you from seemingly nowhere from wakeboats. (I've had personal experience with this on a paddle board, in a canoe with my elderly mother, and swimming around my dock and on floating raft). Additionally, there seems to be a strong linkage (also based on my personal observations) of wake surfing and very loud and obnoxious (and sometimes very inappropriate) music blaring from these boats. This too affects everyone on the lake (as we know sound travels easily and far across the water).

On Lake Morey, we were extremely fortunate to have an alum treatment for Cyanobacteria blooms that has so far proven to be extremely effective. I believe there is some evidence that cites lake bottom turbulence from wake boat propeller downwash as potentially disruptive to lake bottoms, and in this specific case, disruptive to the alum treatment. If so, then this downwash turbulence can potentially re-suspend nutrients that restart Cyanobacteria blooms on our lake.

Why take the risk?? Why put this investment into jeopardy? We can't control high winds or storms, but we can control human behavior and activities. Why would we want to help undo the benefits of the alum treatment and potentially reintroduce Cyanobacteria blooms? To me, the risk does not outweigh the privilege and enjoyment of the sport of wake surfing.

And there is precedent for restricting boat types and activities.... PWCs. Restricting PWCs (sea doos) from Lake Morey, and other lakes, was unpopular for those who owned PWCs, but the vast majority of lake residents and users were extremely grateful for these boats being banned at our lake. The overall benefits of this restriction was prioritized. I think we're in a similar situation now with wake boats and big wake surfing.

I do not believe that wake boats should be allowed on all but the very largest waterbodies in VT. I do support these changes as an improvement to the current rules. Wakesports are too disruptive environmentally, & to the activities enjoyed on waterbodies by the vast majority of people. VT does not have an abundance of quiet waters, let alone undeveloped quiet waters. We need more of that, not less. I'm a paddler. I seek out quiet places to paddle & go outside the state to get it at least once a year because we don't have enough

wilderness like experiences available on the water here. Please protect & enhance what we do have!
It's priceless.

I am writing to urge the State of Vermont to ban wakeboats on all Vermont waterways, or at the very least confine them to greater than a mile from any shoreline. The destructive power of these boats is well documented, and will be particularly damaging on any lake smaller than perhaps Lake Champlain. Even standard water ski boats create substantial waves that I sadly must watch erode the shoreline each summer. With the encouragement and assistance of the Vermont Lakewise program, my wife and I spent substantial time and money over the last few years regenerating the severely eroded shoreline in front of our camp. I would hate to see all this important work ruined. In this age of climate change and environmental degradation, fossil-fuel burning wakeboats frankly have no place in a responsible public waterway management policy. In general, I am a supporter of multi-use policies for our public lands and waterways, but it is unreasonable to allow any use which significantly damages our shared resources.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

Warm regards,

Benjamin Lange M.D.
154 Sparrow Farm Rd
Montpelier, VT 05602
mobile: 603-556-0921

Caspian camp address: 36 Winnimere Cir, Greensboro

Twenty Thousand

Twenty-thousand paddling kayaks,
Fishing boats, swimmers, and canoes,
Battle 200 obnoxious wake surfers,
On our lake waters calm and blue.

We need to send Montpelier a message:
These monsters are destroying our lakes.
Swamping our small craft with each passage,
And spreading pollution in their wakes.

So I contact the Vermont Department
Of Environment, if that's what it takes;
I indeed support your effort
To keep those big boats off our lakes.

The wake boaters, with out-of-state money,
Are lobbying to kibosh this act:
Tens of thousands they're spending: not funny,
Each month in Montpelier: that's a fact.

Allowing wake boats on small and shallow lakes is a disaster. Many lakes are fighting millfoil, wake boats would disrupt it the it spr'ads

Wake boat are a danger to people and water wildlife. They increase erosion around lakes causing landowners to spend money to repair the damage caused by their huge wakes.
Please allow use on only lake Champlain.

Hello— I was greatly disheartened to learn ANR rejected Joes Pond's request to eliminate wake boats and their damage. I understand you don't want to do these rulings on a case by case piecemeal basis and I understand you are proposing rules that would eliminate wake boats from Joes and other ponds as well.

Please implement these proposed changes as quickly as you can as we have already lost significant time in making our original case.

I see that there are other ponds that submitted a petition but would not be impacted by the proposed changes. I hope you can find a way to honor their request and include them with future rule making.
From my experience on an 400 acre pond, wake boats need at least double that.

Thank you for your consideration
Michael Abadi

1. Safety is the first concern: Wake boat waves are 3-4 feet deep and are a powerful force. Small fishing boats, kayaks, canoes, surf boards, sail boats, swimmers, and children are seen leaving the water due to the risk of overturning and possible injury or worse. Especially when 2 or 3 of the wake boats are churning up water, end to end of the lake, at the same time. Many property owners and beach goers wait hours until the boats leave the water before returning to calm waters.
2. Lake bottom disruption: The Salem Lake bottom has a fine silt base that stirs up easily, floats off, and settles in unnatural areas or flows down the Clyde River, then dumping into Lake Memphremagog. It is only 60' deep and the waves from wake boats are disturbing the natural lake bottom and fish populations
3. Lake shore erosion: We can now see bare tree roots along the shoreline where the pounding waves are wearing away soil and stones that held these trees in place. Dying trees will have a negative effect on properties.
4. The Association spent thousands of dollars spraying a weed killer to eliminate Eurasian Milfoil. Wake boats carry hundreds of gallons of water in their ballast and when owners launch their boats in multiple lakes, they are spreading milfoil, zebra mussels, etc. from those lakes to every lake they use. This is a serious problem for small lakes and the associations that cannot afford ongoing spraying.

The proposed rules are a start but do not go far enough. The popularity of wake boats will increase. They need a lake big enough to allow for the large waves without disrupting everyone else from using the lake. Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog, and the Connecticut River satisfy the space needed for wake boat sports, while

I strongly support this new rule. I have been following this controversy for years, and to say I was pleased that the state wanted to tighten up its former rule would be an understatement. The evidence against wake boats is overwhelming, as is public sentiment. Why on earth would we want to promote their proliferation? The fishermen, swimmers, canoeists, paddle boarders, sailors, and kayakers far outnumber the few who can afford wake boats. The latter can well afford to take their boats to the ocean, where they belong. We also are spending money to fight Cyanobacteria, so why promote anything that leads to its growth? I grew up in Rutland and returned here after years away, in great part due to my love of swimming and quiet water sports. I would prefer an outright ban, but this is a step in the right direction. Thank you.

The existing, recently enacted, rules are fine. Do not loosen the restrictions. Wakeboats negatively impact Vermont lakes and shorelines. Further, they endanger people and property.

I know 1st hand how unsettling & dangerous wakes from motorized watercraft can be to others enjoying & utilizing a body of water, we need restrictions to guard the safety of all.

I am in favor of the new rules but please reinstate the HOME RULE.

Wow! ANR is sucking up to a few MAGA, mega rich kids to roar around Vermont lakes on gas guzzling wake boats destroying Vermont's major investment and reputation as a environmentally aware State. Well done putzes.

keep wake surfing off all lakes!

I am in favor of the new rules, but please include the HOME RULE

I am in favor of the proposed rules but PLEASE include the Home Rule. It's important to keep out lakes clean.

I believe failure to implement your proposed 500' operating setbacks from other lake users and the 100-acre wakesport zone to the UPW rules will unnecessarily imperil the wellbeing of ALL lake users, including those participating in wakesports. The impending increase in wakesport activities in Vermont and nationwide cannot be ignored. We can't afford to make an error in judgement that in any way jeopardizes the safety of our citizens, especially since it will take more than 2 years to remedy through the UPW rulemaking process.

To my knowledge, those opposing your amendments have submitted no scientific evidence which supports their opposition to the proposed 500' setbacks and 100-acre wakesport zone. Yet, they object to your proposed amendments that are the result of a comprehensive petition process that were, in fact, amply supported by a myriad of in-depth tests and studies and clearly presented during the pre-rulemaking process.

The petition process has been and will continue to be recourse for anyone objecting to, or wishing to amend any of Vermont's UPW Rules. If ANR's rule changes are implemented as proposed, wakesport enthusiasts will have the opportunity to petition for wakesport rule provisions they consider more favorable to their endeavors, provided they have concrete evidence to support their request.

In the end, you need to feel confident you are doing what's right for our lakes, their ecosystems and the many people who partake in all the wonderful activities a lake has to offer. I feel confident your proposed amendments will do just that. Thank you.

Linda Alderton
Lake Parker
West Glover, VT

Please do the responsible thing and keep wake boats off Vermont lakes — particular pristine lake Willoughby. These wake boats are loud, create horrendous wakes which are unsafe to swimmers, canoes, kayaks and other small craft. Further they are a danger to the loons and their nests which we all try to protect. Additionally their ballast tanks bring invasive species from other bodies of water. Vermont boasts that it is environmentally conscious. Step up, do the right thing and say NO to wake boats! Thank you!

I am strongly in favor of the new wake boat rule. I understand that it will prohibit wake boats from Lake Iroquois, which is the lake I love to go to in the summer. It has a feeling of calm beauty. I love to paddle my kayak there and I saw the loon family there a few years ago. Last summer my grandchildren visited and they enjoyed paddle boarding on Lake Iroquois. The lake was calm, flat and beautiful, and I felt comfortable that they were very safe playing on the water there. The big waves caused by wake boats would disrupt this beauty and be dangerous for people swimming on playing on the water, as well as the loons and other wildlife. Lake Iroquois is a valuable resource for the town of Hinesburg and the other surrounding towns. Please pass the new rule to protect this lake and other small lakes in Vermont.

I am in favor of the new rules but please keep the home rule. thank you

My family camp is on lake Willoughby, i have grown up on this lake. please keep the home rule. i love seeing motorboats pulling kids on tubes and skiers and the wakeboats ruin that experience. Wake boats belong in much larger bodies of water, not our small VT lakes

I am in favor of the new rules, but please include the HOME RULE.

Paid Wake Sports Lobbyists with no vested interest in Vermont Inland lakes have no right to ignore the inherent public risks. They are not "normal use". I wholeheartedly support the proposed changes.

If people want to surf, American has two coasts. Surfing on lakes is disruptive to others enjoyment of the lake - swimming, fishing, kayaking, canoing, waterskiing, and the use of smaller craft are disrupted. Stirring up the lake impacts aquatic life, and don't get me started about it disrupting the enjoyment of children!

As a committee member of the Joe's Pond Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) Committee, I am writing to express my serious concerns about wake boating on Vermont's lakes — particularly smaller lakes such as Joe's Pond in Cabot/West Danville.

In 2024, EWM was discovered in Joe's Pond. Since then, Joe's Pond Association (JPA) has invested significant time, volunteer effort, and financial resources to manage and contain this invasive species. We have seen firsthand how quickly invasive plants can spread and how difficult and costly it is to control once established.

Wake-enhanced boats generate powerful surf-like waves that disturb the bottom sediments more so than traditional boating. On smaller lakes like ours, this sediment disturbance increases shoreline erosion and may contribute to the spread of invasive plant fragments.

In addition, wake boats carry large volumes of water in their ballast tanks to create enhanced waves. These ballast tanks cannot be fully drained and dried between lake visits so residual water may remain inside the tanks. The remaining water can be transported from one lake to another despite surface cleaning efforts.

These impacts directly undermine the hard work and the expenses lake associations are investing to protect water quality and prevent the spread of invasive species.

For these reasons, I strongly support Department of Environmental Conservation amended rules.

Vermont's lakes are an environmental, recreational, and economic treasure. Protecting them must take precedence over accommodating one specific recreational activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

I support Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes recommendations for wakesports over the current VT wakesports rules, but I believe Vermont should go further. Wakeboats should not be considered a "normal use" for the principles of the UPW Rules. Wakeboats are not normal---they create excessively high wakes compared to normal boating. The impacts of wakesports on the environment and other users are not reasonable and will only get worse over time as wakeboats get bigger and bigger. Just because manufacturers build more and more powerful motorized machines, doesn't mean Vermont has to accommodate them in the public space where they are a detriment to all other users and our natural resource values. Therefore, I'm for banning wakesporting on all of our lakes and ponds.

I believe that wake boats, used for the purpose of skiing and tubing, with the ballast tanks EMPTY, are ok. The owners have a lot of money invested in them and they are nice people. I do not mind the engine noise or the music they play but when ballasted, it is just too much for a lake of our size. Their tanks can be filled from a depth of as little as two feet which I know can fragment and ingest pieces of EWM which can be dispersed anywhere, including shallow areas like at the boat ramp or even their own docks. We have had enough with EWM issues and it's going to ruin my shoreline for sure.

I firmly support DEC's amended Rule change and hope it's not too late for it to have a positive impact on our priceless resource.

We own a small camp on Peacham Pond. It is the quiet, calm, natural nature of this pond that attracts us to it. We are 100% in support of the new legislation to further restrict the use of wakeboards on Vermont waters. Our pond is used mostly by swimmers, people in kayaks or canoes, people fishing, a few skiers, and some slow moving pontoon boats. Every year we monitor the loon population and keep track of the number of chicks that are hatched and survive. This past summer, at least two of the newly hatch chicks were suspected of being killed by motor craft on the lake. The increased presence of wakeboards will undoubtedly result in the loss of more of these precious water fowl. The 500 foot limit currently in place still allows wakeboards to use a portion of our pond. Since it is only 350 acres in size, their presence is disruptive, unpleasant, & environmentally damaging to the entire lake. I encourage you to do whatever you can to enact the new legislation that will prohibit wakeboards from using small, quiet Vermont ponds like ours. Thank you for your efforts & for asking for our input.

Please be considerate of the the folks who swim, fish, use smaller boats to kayak, canoe, sail and paddle on Willoughby Lake. These are residents along the shores and the very many folks who come down to the lake for the day. The south end of the lake narrows considerably from the north shore and the wide bay by the boat launch. Our Vermont lakes have been special places of rest and recreation for generations of Vermonters and visitors to our state. They have worked to accommodate new ways of enjoying the lake but also to protect these special places for the generations to follow. While I support the proposed rules I strongly urge you to reinstate the HOME RULE.

I continue to be puzzled about why this is even an issue. The safety and environmental concerns raised by the use of these boats clearly outweighs any benefit to anyone. I raised safety concerns in my last letter to this aged, as a board certified pediatrician who practiced in the state of Vermont for 30 years and who has continued to teach at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth. There is just no reason to subject our young boaters and swimmers to this kind of potential danger. I don't understand what the agency's goal is here. Do you want the majority of Vermonters to be able to boat safely, or only the few with lots of money and powerful engines?

Do concerns about protection of habitat for species, such as loons, not weigh at all in this decision?

Please keep large boats off our lakes

Wake boats have no place in our lakes. They are dangerous to other boaters, cause pollution and disrupt others' enjoyment. They disturb wildlife, damage shorelines.

The revisions of the UPW rules do not address the risk of contamination of waters and ecosystems, introduction of invasive species into pristine waters of this state because of inadequate decontamination resulting in ecosystem disruption, nor do they address the potential for increased power of motors and size of wake boats in the future. Wake boats are a nonconforming UPW in the first place. Allowing nonconforming watercraft into use in the state's waters risks the use of other nonconforming watercraft to also come into our waters without the processes necessary to assure they will not harm our lake ecosystems. Fresh, clean water is essential for life and the ecosystems that sustain our lakes, organisms mostly unseen but vital, are very precious but aren't considered when a huge boat plows through the water. It's time to consider the organisms existing in our lakes be given the respect that organisms living in forests are given.

I respectfully request that the Agency of Natural Resources reconsider banning wake boats upon any waters of the State --- particularly with regard to any waters with classification A(1) status such as Echo Lake in Charleston, VT. The public trust doctrine ensures that navigable waters remain a public resource that cannot be appropriated by a class of private users to the harm or exclusion of others. Wake boats are a deleterious private use that cause harm and damage to shorelines and wildlife habitat and increase likelihood of transporting invasive species between water bodies . The size and characteristics of wake boats make them particularly harmful to fishing, canoeing, kayaking and swimming on our inland lakes. The shared use of public trust waters with traditional motorboats does not require that wake boats be authorized on inland lakes. Allowing a use that is deleterious to all other public uses is a violation of the duties of the State of Vermont as Trustee to protect the waters and their environmental attributes for the benefit of all present and future generations of users of these most valuable resources.

My family owns property on Lake Iroquois in Hinesburg, VT which has been in our family for four generations. I support the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules, in particular the sections regarding wakesports. Unfortunately, the wakes created by wakeboats travel greater distances and retain more power than wakes generated by normal inboard/outboard motor boats and are dangerous to both swimmers and wildlife and detrimental to the shore in the form of erosion. I support further restrictions on which bodies of water wakeboats can be operated on within the state, hopefully restricting them to the largest and deepest bodies of water where the danger and destruction caused by the wakes can be mitigated.

I am not interested in having wake boats on our lake. They are too fast and our lake isn't big enough to handle several at a time. Many people canoe, kayak, paddle board and swim. Some don't enjoy the lake as they should..

Wake boats are destructive to the lake system and dangerous to other lake users and wildlife. My family has a camp on Groton lake. It is very shallow in a lot of areas and to even swim, you have to practically walk half way across the lake. I feel like a sitting duck when i'm out there. The erosion has increased dramatically as well. we had to search for property markers and they are practically underwater now. The waves that wake boats make are huge and destructive to the shoreline and wildlife, specifically loons. It's a huge problem is that there is no enforcement of the current wake boat rules at all. People are blatantly flouting the rules because they know there will be no repercussions. Please extend the rules and work on enforcement.

We have a camp on Sunset Lake. Ours is a pristine quiet lake enjoyed by swimmers, paddlers, and occasional water skiers. We have a delicate ecosystem which would be permanently destroyed by wake sports. Ours is the smallest lake which would have permitted wake sports with the original rules. I strongly support the modifications of the rules which would outlaw wake sports on our precious lake. I am in favor of the rule. Wakesports should be restricted to those bodies of water large enough that wakesports can be performed without unduly harming the ecosystem and detracting from the enjoyment of other recreationalists.

I think wake boats are a terrible idea and should be banned from Vermont. They risk invasive species. Damage shorelines, and disrupt the tranquility of our lakes. They swamp other boats like kayaks.

To cave in to the "Wakesports" would be a permanent black Black Mark to the beauty of the Green Mountain State, but very much in keeping with the Greed and Selfishness that is invading the leaders of our current National Administration. What do you want for Vermont's future, catering to the greed and selfishness of the few or benefiting the enjoyment of the masses who enjoy the peace and harmony that I have enjoyed for more than 80 years.

With the discovery of Eurasian water milfoil in Joe's Pond, it is even more important that we keep an environment absent of wakeboard boats and their disruptive impact on the pond with the high potential of spreading the invasive.

I support the DEC's changes in response to your concerns about boater & swimmer safety. I have recently canoed in 4 of Vermont's smaller and larger lakes (reservoirs) and wake boats scare the crap out of me and I hate the noise and traffic when paddling and launching.

I do support the changes. As someone who enjoys canoeing, I am often hesitant to go where there are lots of wake sports, as I am often bombarded with noise and waves as I bird watch from my canoe. I am out to enjoy nature and it is hard when I am worried about my safety.

I also have concerns about the shoreline erosion caused by larger waves. Especially when it comes to nesting birds.

My family owns a small cabin on the shore of Lake Morey. With two children's camps and many vacation homes, Lake Morey is busy every summer with sailboats, kayaks, paddle boards, canoes, and long distance swimmers. I am concerned that this rule does not go far enough to protect their safety.

Our cabin was built decades ago, close to the shoreline, where we have seen erosion over time. In recent years, loons have successfully nested nearby. The waves generated by wakesports threaten the lakeside homes of both humans and wildlife. Approve this rule, but please do more!

Wake boats are an environmental disaster. Our lakes need us to protect them from such boats. We kayakers also need them outlawed in Vermont to save lake experiences for the majority

I submitted an email with counterpoints to 15 of the various comments made by wakeboat proponents during your public hearings held in Jan and Feb this year. Those comments were sent to the ANR.WSMDLakes@vermont.gov website. I will not repeat them here, although I hope that you will give them serious consideration.

Sunset Lake in Benson (Rutland County) is one of the smaller lakes that is currently on your list of wakesport permitted lakes. The majority of the current 73.6 Acres depicted on your website map of wakesport permitted zone has no protective buffer zone for the 2 "underwater islands" that both rise to less than 20 feet from the lakes surface. The larger of the two underwater islands is within 10 feet of the water's surface. When kayaking over this area of the lake my wife and I have seen curly leaf pondweed that has grown within a foot of the water's surface. Looking at the map on your website it would seem impossible for wakeboat operators to avoid scouring the bottom of lake in these shallow areas. Thereby, destroying the vegetation, fish habitat and water clarity in the main part of the wakesport zone. Even if ANR decides to require the hoped for 30 foot depth (supported as necessary by science studies conducted in other states) for wakesport activity in Vermont's lakes not all wakesport activities are going to be confined to the designated zones. Wakeboat damage to our lakes ecosystems and it's negative impact and hazards imposed on other lake users needs to be mitigated by strong regulations. A failure to protect the safety and enjoyment, of by far the majority of lake recreationist, will be very difficult (if not impossible) to remedy in future years.

I regularly use Harriman Reservoir for swimming and I am opposed to wakesports on this highly scenic and recreated reservoir due to safety concerns, invasive species transfer and disruption of a peaceful setting.

I have been the editor of Vermont Sports for 10-plus years, an avid boater and outdoor recreationalist. I understand the allure of wakeboats. I am a surfer and have been wakeboarding. I know how much fun it is.

I also live on Lake Dunmore. I have seen the shoreline damage that wakeboats have done. Our own lakefront has eroded significantly more in the last 5 years than in the 10 years prior. The docks shake as large boats go by and the lake bottom, once clear, has become murky and muddy. In place of bass and trout, we now have catfish nesting off our shores.

Most of Vermont's lakes are habitats that were relatively wave-free for much of their existence. Loons, otter, mink, fish, amphibians and other creatures make their homes on these lakes in part because of this. It is not worth the ecological damage to allow wakeboats to operate on any lake with the possible exception of Lake Memphremagog or Lake Champlain. Even there, when those boats operate close to shore, they have impacts.

Wakeboats also jeopardize other uses of our public waters and can create unsafe conditions for swimmers, paddlers, and other boaters. Here on Lake Dunmore we have finally dropped 5mph no-wake marker buoys 200 feet from shore. That has helped but there are still plenty who ignore these, as they will any "wakesport" zone, especially if the zones and laws vary from lake to lake.

Let's face it: you can write all the rules you want but once on the water, wake "zones" are ambiguous, often ignored and the state does not have the resources to police them.

A wakeboat 400 or 800 or even 1600 feet offshore will still create a huge wave, a seismic impact to these "safe" zones and the shoreline. It's as much the shape of the lake, as well as its size, that governs how wakes impact the shoreline so having a rule that is based on.

Having been the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Economic Development, I also understand that wakeboats mean money for the areas they operate in— they are expensive and the folks who operate them, spend money in our state.

Yet, their use can also turn away many more vacationers who come to the state for the peace and beauty Vermont is known for.

Please don't let short-term pleasure of wakeboating get in the way of the long-term goals of preserving our lakes and environment and their traditional uses. The state needs a clear law on limiting wakeboats to specific lakes.

Thank you,
Lisa Gosselin Lynn

Why is ANR finding it so difficult to put in place needed regulations for a wakeboat vessel design that is considered as not a normal use on Vermont's public waters?

Strong regulation is needed NOW (not in a wait and see manner) for a form of recreation that is not a normal use and that already has a "foot in the door". Wakeboats have mistakenly been treated as just another motorized boat. This mistake has created an entitlement attitude by many wakeboat owners and certainly by the wakeboat industry. Ocean sized waves, with more destructive underwater power than ocean waves, that can be created by wakeboats should have never been allowed. And probably would not be allowed if the multiple problems associated with wakesports had been accurately understood and foreseeable. Unfortunately, some wakeboat owners demand the right to use Vt public waters despite all that we have learned about the inherent problems associated with their use. DEC should not allow the small number of wakesport advocates to adversely affect our lake environment and our enjoyment and safety of "flat water". Without proper regulation wakesports will increase on our lakes and the public outcry will increase. If that happens DEC/ANR will be faced with ever increasing problems to address.

Sincerely, Dr. Mark D. Johnston

Allowing wake boats on Vermont's lakes and ponds is like putting a speedboat in a swimming pool. It makes no sense. It's unsafe and has a negative impact on the water quality.

Wake boats have NO PLACE mixing with swimmers, kayakers, canoes, wildlife and small wake fishing boats along with an occasional evening water ski boat. Lake Willoughby in Westmore is and must remain a peaceful place. Please ban these destructive inappropriate boats from one of Vermont's very special lakes.

I understand the deadline was extended and if it was at the request of Woodard Marine on Bomoseen it is a sneaky, underhanded lobbying tactic to mobilize for their financial gain. The clean up of spread of invasive species - IF possible- will cost more than any money to be made thru catering to the wakeboat industry or fighting to protect our lakes from them. You need to do your job of protecting our environment which in turn protects our economy. We must have decontamination facilities at all waters they are allowed on , functional enforcement , and home lake rules . If that isn't manageable then ban them until/unless it is. Anything less is unconscionable.

Invasive species devastation to our public waters aside, wakeboats are incompatible with other watercraft and swimmers who enormously outnumber wake-boats. When the non-wakeboaters start avoiding Lake Willoughby then Westmore suffers economically. It's an unfair burden.

When wakeboats underestimate their distance from others (which is inevitable) and place others in harms way because of the wakeboat's UNNATURALLY large wake or because they just can't see the swimmer/diver/kayak over their high bow then we have the problem of lengthy response time for rescue and no way to identify problem operators or report them. Most Phones don't work on Willoughby. It's no surprise there are few complaints . Who would I complain to that could intervene in a timely manner? Your VSP and game warden coverage is too thin as it is and Westmore has no enforcement or emergency services.

I feel strongly that those of us who swim, kayak, sail and fish need as much protection as possible from disturbing wakes. 500 feet is the bare minimum needed. Our lakes need this much protection from devastating erosion too. The time to act is now. It is unfair to cave to the few people who can afford these wakeboats and the companies that sell them rather than the majority of us that enjoy traditional water uses on our lakes and ponds. I live in Westmore and hope Lake Willoughby can be protected. I think it's a mistake not to keep the home lake rule. Invasives are in other nearby lakes and we don't have adequate means to clean out balasts.

There is simply no need to wakesurf on a lake

There are so many reasons for not allowing wake boats, on our "watery home", Lake Caspian! churning up vegetation on the lake's floor, where fish lay their eggs & provide food for the little "fry". We have a number of loon pairs, who raise their young, on the surface of the water & where they learn to fly & fish! Oil, on the edges, can get on vegetation, root systems, feathers, the water's surface, where some baby insects maybe trying to breathe & will die. Everything is connected, from the smallest living things to the huge game fish, otters, beavers, native ducks, & other waterfowl, wild foods, wood for a campfire & later watch the moon come up. All of these things are very precious to me! Not that I wish any harm to sea creatures, why don't these folks go east, to the Atlantic Ocean, there's lots of lots of water & hopefully, the wild sea creatures will dive deep, when they hear the rumbling of all the craziness headed their way. They have as much right to life as any living thing. I believe this more everyday & provide the birds, butterflies, little furry friends & some bigger ones! And, I have 2 acres in native wild plants/flowers, trees, hawks, foxes, occasionally in spring, a mamma bear, will bring her babies to play on our "farmer's porch", with me safely watching from a window.

I am concerned about the need for strong regulations for all Vt lakes as well as Sunset Lake especially as in the capacity of an active board officer.

I spend my summers at Lake Willoughby in Vermont, and I care deeply about protecting the character of the places we're lucky enough to enjoy.

Years ago, jet skis were banned on Lake Willoughby, and it was one of the best decisions our community made. The result was immediate: quieter water, less shoreline erosion, less stress on wildlife, and a lake that felt peaceful again. Families could paddle, swim, and fish without constant wake or engine noise. It preserved what makes Vermont summers special.

Wake boating presents similar concerns—large artificial wakes that contribute to shoreline erosion, stir up sediment, damage aquatic habitat, and disrupt the calm that so many people seek out on public waters. These lakes are shared resources, not private playgrounds, and their long-term health matters more than any single recreational trend.

Vermont has a long tradition of putting land before business—of valuing stewardship over short-term profit. That mindset is part of what makes this state special. Protecting our public waters from activities that fundamentally change their character isn't anti-recreation; it's pro-responsibility.

If we've already seen the benefits of thoughtful limits on our lakes, we shouldn't ignore those lessons now.

I oppose allowing wake boats to operate on Vermont lakes. In a time when we are working so hard to have a cleaner environment, the last thing we need is yet more diesel engines spewing exhaust into the air (and likely, spilling it into our lovely clean water). As a longtime kayaker, I and my family have paddled across Willoughby many times. Evaluating weather and wind patterns is essential to our safety. These boats create waves that will impact (and likely, drown) innocent, unsuspecting kayakers. I have also observed how these waves come to ashore and impact our little unsuspecting children (and their parents) as well.

First, some historical background:

Walking is the oldest and most basic form of adult human locomotion. Because of this history, cultures afford pedestrians special status: pedestrians in public spaces have priority over vehicles—bicycles, motorcycles, cars, trucks. The concept is that the older, more basic transportation mode has priority. This is a rare concession to people who cannot afford or prefer not to be carried by something or someone else, and do so on their own feet. Similarly, a horse and rider has priority over bicycles and motor vehicles. (There are exceptions in special situations: a train has priority in its corridor—the train tracks—not because it is the older form of transportation, but because it is simply too massive to yield to everything that might cross its path; interstate highways do not allow bicycles or pedestrians, partly out of concern for their safety.)

Similarly, swimming and human- and wind-powered watercraft vastly pre-date motorized craft, and must be given the same consideration. Waterski boats, while in existence for perhaps 100 years, create smaller wakes than wakeboats do, and yet they must yield to more-vulnerable water users such as swimmers, paddlers and sailors. Even a small boat with only a trolling motor must yield. Allowing wakeboats to DOMINATE a public resource, TAKING PRIORITY over all other lake users, is lopsided. It places a higher value on wakeboat users than on all others using that PUBLIC RESOURCE. It is a complete reversal of traditional respect for those who, for whatever reasons, have less. It is the practical equivalent of allowing NASCAR or Formula One races on public roads, which we do not allow for obvious reasons. A wakeboat, by the very nature of its wake CANNOT EFFECTIVELY YIELD to other lake users BECAUSE THE WAKE IS SO POWERFUL AND TRAVELS SO FAR.

For the above reasons, I urge Vermont to completely disallow use of wakeboats on Shadow Lake in Glover, Holland Pond, Peacham Pond, Lake Parker, Lake Willoughby, Lake Fairlee, and Harvey's Lake.

At the very least, Vermont must not weaken or compromise existing rules regarding wakeboat use on those water bodies as proposed by a group of wakeboat advocates at the January 16, 2026 Agency of Natural Resources meeting convened by Laura Dlugolecki to "brainstorm alternative ideas and strategies to resolve conflict." Any conflict in this issue was generated by wakeboats and their users.

I have been informed that that meeting was held outside the formal public rulemaking process. This was perhaps a violation of Vermont's Open Meeting law. I object to the State making rules in secret with members of the wakeboat community. I also object to the extension of the deadline for comments past the original deadline.

The introduction of wakeboard boats to Lake Fairlee, VT, represents a significant threat to the environmental health and safety of this small, tranquil body of water. These vessels are engineered to displace massive volumes of water, creating powerful, high-energy waves that lead to accelerated shoreline erosion and the destruction of delicate loon nesting habitats. Beyond the ecological damage, the sheer force of these wakes creates a hazardous environment for traditional lake users; I have personally experienced the dangerous impact of these waves, which can easily swamp a kayak or cause a pontoon boat to pitch violently, risking passenger injury and equipment damage. Furthermore, the deep-reaching turbulence from wake-enhancing ballast tanks stirs up phosphorus-rich sediment from the lake bed, fueling cyanobacteria blooms that threaten the water quality for everyone. To preserve the multi-generational character of Lake Fairlee and ensure the safety of its most vulnerable boaters, a ban on these specialized high-impact craft is a necessary and urgent measure.

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

I'm writing to share my strong support for prohibiting wakesports and wake-enhancing ballast boats on Lake Fairlee. As long-time users of this lake, we have seen firsthand how the nature of our water has changed, and we believe Lake Fairlee is simply too small to safely accommodate the "walls of water" these boats are designed to produce.

While we understand there are general statewide rules in place, Lake Fairlee has unique qualities that make high-impact wakes particularly dangerous here. We are deeply concerned about the following:

Safety of Vulnerable Boaters: We frequently see children out in canoes, kayaks, and small sailing boats. These young boaters do not have the hull stability to handle a massive, high-energy wake. A single pass from a wake boat can swamp these small crafts in seconds, turning a learning experience into a life-threatening situation.

Dangerous Impacts on Traditional Boats: I have personally experienced the danger of these waves while out on a pontoon boat and in my kayak. The force of these wakes causes even larger boats to pitch violently, risking injury to passengers and damage to equipment. In a kayak, the waves are frequent and powerful enough to make you feel completely unsafe.

A "Scary" Environment for Swimmers: Swimming in the lake has become a scary experience. When you are in the water and a massive wake rolls in, you feel invisible to the larger boats and struggle just to stay afloat as the water churns around you. It has taken the peace and safety out of one of our favorite lake activities.

Environmental Protection: Lake Fairlee is a fragile ecosystem. These deep-reaching waves stir up the bottom and crash against our shorelines, causing erosion and threatening the quiet nesting areas of our local wildlife, including our loon population.

We believe that the best way to preserve the multi-generational character and safety of Lake Fairlee is to prohibit the use of wake-enhancing equipment. We ask the DEC to prioritize the safety of traditional lake users—swimmers, kayakers, and families in small boats—by moving forward with a prohibition on wakesports for this specific body of water.

Thank you for your time and for considering the safety of our community.

Dear Board Members,

I am writing in support of keeping wake boards off Shadow Lake in Glover, Vermont.

Shadow Lake is a small, peaceful lake that has long served families, swimmers, kayakers, anglers, and wildlife alike. Wake boarding requires specialized boats designed to create large, powerful wakes. On a lake of this size, those wakes would significantly increase safety risks, shoreline erosion, and user conflicts.

Beyond safety concerns, the environmental impact is substantial. Large wakes disturb shallow-water habitats, increase turbidity, damage aquatic vegetation, and threaten nesting areas for loons and other waterfowl. These habitats are essential to maintaining the ecological balance and natural character of the lake.

Allowing wake boards would fundamentally change the quiet, family-friendly nature of Shadow Lake. I respectfully ask the board to prioritize safety, wildlife protection, and long-term environmental stewardship by prohibiting wake boards.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

I live near and boat on Lake Eden in Eden Mills as well as many other lakes and ponds in northern VT. Wake Boats dominate lakes when they are present in all the wrong ways, trying to create an unnatural surfing condition on quiet and still waters. Please restrict these boats to very large bodies of water and far from any shore.

Hello,

My name is Damian Gagne and I am a resident of the Shadow Lake community in Glover. I'm writing this to state that:

- 1) I support stronger public safety regulations.
- 2) I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.
- 3) I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.
- 4) I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Please help us protect our lake given the fragility of the ecosystem especially after the major flooding events of recent years.

Thanks for your consideration

Let's keep Shadow Lake healthy

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Lake Fairlee is not conducive to wake boats. There are numerous youth camps and these boats would endanger these young people. The lake is a serene and beautiful and the wake boats would cause erosion and dangerous waves and conditions. I am completely against these boats on Lake Fairlee due to its size and character.

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impact.

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Yes, please strengthen the regulation of wakesports in Vermont and add the Waterbury Reservoir to the list of lakes where wakesports are prohibited! The Waterbury Reservoir is enjoyed by locals and tourists participating in a wide variety of water sports and activities such as fishing, camping, paddle boards, canoes and strictly regulated boating. Please help keep our lake safe and enjoyable for humans, fish, loons alike and help us protect its natural beauty from erosion and pollution stemming from wakesports.

I am a summer resident and taxpayer living on Lake Willoughby in Westmore Vermont. I have been watching with grave concern as the number and size of Wakeboats on our lake have increased in the past several years. While I support these proposed changes I don't think they go far enough. My concerns about safety, noise and the proliferation of invasive species are so important and should be the first priority of any regulations.

If everyone familiar with various lake activities would take an open view of what is best for all it is so obvious that wake boats have NO PLACE on most lakes in Vermont. What is fun for a few people is detrimental for the majority of people and the wildlife found in the lakes. Several years ago I observed a single jet ski on Crystal Lake. Just that one motoring around the lake created enough waves to make it impossible for me to troll in my 14' boat and 6HP motor. Wake boats are designed to make even much larger waves! Common sense is all that is needed in regard to the problem facing the MAJORITY of those wishing to enjoy our lakes.

I am in favor of the proposed changes to the Vermont Use of Public Waters Rule.

Wakesports depend on artificially generated, ocean-sized waves that threaten Vermont's inland lakes. This is possibly the first time in history that man has intentionally created ocean-sized waves for recreation purposes.

Wakeboats are necessary to create these monstrous wakes. They are a recent addition to the motorboat fleet. The stated goal of the motorboat industry is to "expand markets for recreational uses." I do not believe they know or care about Vermont's environment. Their interest is to make money for their industry, period.

I am here to remind the DEC, that the word conservation is defined as "the preservation and protection of land and other natural resources for enjoyment by future generations".

I strongly support the proposed wake sport amendments.

The wakeboat industry has turned its attention to Vermont. Lake Bomoseen wakeboat owners and commercial marinas, along with professional lobbyists, have showed up to protest the new proposed rule amendments. Please do not allow our public process to be hijacked by industry representatives and self-interested individuals from Vermont's largest inland lake.

Lake Bomoseen wakesport enthusiasts will remain largely unaffected by the proposed rule changes. They will continue to enjoy their sport. The marinas will continue to practice business as usual.

The main argument from this opposition group is that regulation is unnecessary. The focus should be on education instead. Unfortunately, this begs the question -- if education works, why do they still balk at keeping a safe distance from swimmers and paddlers? Their insistence serves as evidence that education in fact does NOT work! Both science and lived experience argue for increasing the distance from other lake users to protect public safety. It is alarming that wakesport practitioners still insist that swimmers and paddlers are safe at a distance of 200 feet.

Lake Bomoseen at 2,400 acres is categorically different from the other truly small Vermont lakes, many of which are closer to 400 or 500 acres.

Please stand up for the rest of Vermont and don't allow this special-interest group to derail a carefully researched rule.

Please enact the proposed rule amendments to protect public safety on our smaller lakes and ponds.

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Please protect our lake! Flooding and erosion have had huge impacts on the shore and properties around Shadow Lake. And now the water level is incredibly low, making the area of the lake smaller.

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Wakeboats are bad for lake ecology. They stir up lake sediment, thereby distributing it throughout the water column (the entire depth of the water), where it is likely to be spread to other areas by currents, wind, and the boat's wake itself. These sediments, and the nutrients they carry, can enhance the growth of invasive plants and degrade water quality AND OTHER LAKE USERS' EXPERIENCE. It is entirely inappropriate to allow one class of lake users to degrade the recreational experience of most, if not all, other lake users.

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed revisions to the Use of Public Waters Rules. Specifically:

Wakesports Zone Criteria: I support the 100-acre minimum and 3,000-foot run requirements without exception. I oppose any compromises that would allow wakesurfing on Shadow Lake in Glover or the other 11 lakes slated for a wakesports restriction. I support the "smoothing" of wakesports zones.

Safety Buffers: I strongly support for the 500-foot safety buffer between wakesports and other lake users on all wakesports eligible lakes to protect traditional recreation users and critical loon nesting sites.

Environmental Protection: Shadow Lake is ecologically incapable of absorbing the impact of even a single enhanced wake. We must prohibit wakesports here to conserve the lake's health for future generations.

Thank you

I support the Lakeshore zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3000 ft. Run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on shadow lake in glover.

Moving boats from one water body to another can also move invasive species that are attached to a boat, its hardware, and its trailer. That is why so many of Vermont's lakes and ponds ask boat users to 'disinfect' their equipment before putting it in the water.

A wakeboat's ballast tank makes the boat too heavy for practical trailering, so the tank must be emptied. But there is no practical way to completely empty AND disinfect the tank (and there is no current way to enforce disinfection). This presents the very real risk of moving invasive species from one water body to another. For this reason, wakeboats must be restricted to a SINGLE water body. But without a real, practical enforcement mechanism, the only way to avoid moving invasives is to ban wakeboats from Vermont's water bodies.

I have a camp on Shadow Lake in Glover, Vt.

Our lake is too small to safely allow wake boats, especially since the water level was dropped at least 2 ft because of dam damage.

The wakes would impact the loon population, boating, fishing, kayaking, swimming and the clarity of the lake. They would increase soil erosion. More invasive species would be introduced.

The majority of people using the lake would be negatively impacted. Because our lake is so small it wouldn't be that much of a rush for the actual wake boats.

There are many bigger lakes that wouldn't be negatively impacted.

I request that wake boats not be allowed on our lake.

Thanks, Jane Vinton

I fully support any state regulations and rule making that limits the access of wake boats on Vermont's small lakes and reservoirs. As a person who very much enjoys the peace, serenity, and natural experience of spending time in and on Vermont's small lakes and reservoirs, it is very upsetting to have to deal with the noise, shoreline erosion, harmful impacts to wildlife that wake boats and other high speed motor boats can cause to public resources. High speed motor boats, like wake boats, can also present dangers on the water to unmotorized watercraft, such as kayakers, canoeists, and paddleboarders, as they navigate through small lakes and reservoirs. There are other, larger bodies of water in the state that wake boaters can access. It is good to set aside some of the states's water resources and natural areas to remain free of noisy and polluting boats for those who enjoy nature and for the wildlife, birds, and fish that depend on these waters for their habitats. I would advise that the state also consider adding more restrictions to wake boats in the future so that more people can enjoy Vermont's lakes and public waters without the detrimental impacts that wake boats can cause.

My particular focus is on Lake Willoughby, where my family has been long time and generational residents. I believe strict rules should be applied to wakesports to protect its pristine environment. The noise and large waves created by wake boats are not welcome on our lake. It spoils the experience of being on the lake for kayakers and stand up paddle boarders, and creates erosion on lake front properties. The lake is large enough to accommodate regular water ski boats, but boats that intentionally create large waves are dangerous and unappealing to broader users of the lake and its shoreline.

We are responsible for the welfare of our planet. Protecting our waterways should be a focus for all. Willoughby Lake, a National treasure, has already suffered the introduction of Eurasian watermilfoil. PLEASE do not relax rules governing wake boats on Vermont's lakes. It is a known fact that the tanks on these boats will cause contamination if not cleaned properly. Why risk further contamination of our cherished waterways. PLEASE also consider the harm to loon nests and the erosion of shoreline. Protect our lakes for this generation, and for future ones. There are larger waterways that might be appropriate for wake boats. Willoughby should be protected from the harm wake boats will cause. Multi-use sharing is a difficult balance to achieve in any public area, but the negative effects of wakesports on too many use groups makes it inappropriate to allow on any land-locked body of water within Vermont.

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

- I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Peaceful. Quiet. Relaxing. Enjoying nature is becoming more challenging in Vermont. Mitigating the loss of these wonderful aspects of Vermont life can be hugely challenging (increased noise from jets, road noise growth, encroachment) but this issue feels like low hanging fruit. Quiet use of some bodies of water just makes sense. Inexperienced canoers and swimmers are in jeopardy when heavy wake hits them. The noise shatters the calm. The erosion along the banks is clearly a problem.

These lakes are NOT large enough to support wake boat traffic, and will not only damage the lake environment, but will also cause many issues, making it either not able or very difficult for other users.

After watching wake board boats swamp SUP's running from the Waterbury State Beach Park to the dam, it is apparent that reservoir is not a place for surf boats

Wake Boats provide an outlet for those few people who can afford them, to “surf” in the bucolic natural setting of Vermont, if you permit them to. This, as in most other activities DEC permits, comes at a price. What DEC is grappling with is the balance between the cost and the benefit of providing this outlet for the privileged few who can afford the illusion of “surfing” on a Vermont lake.

The ‘cost’ of this activity is environmentally and economically substantial given the benefit for the few who will “enjoy” it. There are the costs of toxic emersions from highly powered motorized boats, the damage done by the disruption of the phosphorus on the lakebeds leading to potential toxic algae blooms (particularly in smaller lakes), threatened loon habitat, threatened canoe and kayak paddlers, threatened swimmers, aquatic invasive species spread and the destroyed lakeshore which we all have worked so hard to preserve.

This last point, lakeshore destruction, is particularly ironic given the States level of resource commitment to preserving said lakeshores, to say nothing of the hours of volunteer efforts dedicated to this topic. Honestly, your commitment to the wake boat industry, and lack of attention to the multiple lake associations and individuals who have tried desperately to show you how badly you have gotten the balance on this issue is stunning (denying 9 lake association petitions).

We (the lake associations and individuals) understand how corporate pressure and corporate lobbying do have an impact on you. How could it not? That said, please, please listen. Once you open this door they will only want more. We have all worked so hard to get Vermont to the place it is, with recognized pristine lakes and a commitment to the land and waters that is rarely found elsewhere in this country. Once that is gone it will be truly gone.

Imagine

Vermont with no bass fishing (wake boats disrupt this both from habitat and danger to the bass boats).

Vermont with a declining loon population (we just got them growing in the right direction)

Vermont with unsafe boating and swimming on its smaller lakes (wake boats create unsafe wakes for swimmers, kayaks and canoes) Yes, there are people who swim the lakes not just paddle on the shore.

Imagine

How would that impact Vermont’s ‘green’ image and tourist dollars associated with that? Did DEC do an economic impact study or simply take the projections conveniently provided by the wake boat industry?

None of us want to lose our state’s natural beauty and with it the attraction as a recreation destination. The use of wake boats on our lakes will certainly bring about such a loss.

-I support stronger public safety regulations.

-I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

-I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

-I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft rule revisions. We are a group of former managers and staff of the DEC Watershed Management Division and its predecessor, the Water Quality Division, who are now retired and continue to communicate and meet annually each summer on a Vermont lake. Members include a former Division Director, Deputy Director, Chief of Lakes and Ponds Program, Chief of Planning, Director of Biological Laboratory, Chief of Wetlands Program, and many other retired aquatic biologists, ecologists, engineers and other scientists who have served Vermonters. Collectively, we have many decades of experience managing Vermont's public waters, and we hope that DEC may benefit from that experience.

While there are extensive revisions to the rules, our comments focus on the provisions related to wakeboats. Although we have varied expertise and experience managing Vermont's water resources, we have concluded that wakeboats have no place on any of Vermont's inland lakes. We come to this conclusion reluctantly, as prohibiting a recreational use of our lakes is a major step. But, the proposed restrictions on wakeboat operation notwithstanding, the potential for significant and irreparable ecological damage and user conflict requires this step be taken, and taken now. The ecological harm includes impacts to aquatic birds (especially loons, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need), shoreline spawners, transmission of aquatic invasive species between waterbodies, shoreline erosion and mobilization of bottom sediments in shallow areas. Further, recreational conflicts will inevitably occur, and enforcement of restrictions on operation (wakesport zones and buffer zones for swimmers and other boaters) will place demands on law enforcement agencies that are already stretched thin.

For these reasons we urge DEC to prohibit the use of wakeboats on all of Vermont's inland lakes. DEC staff has done an admirable job researching the ecological and social impact of wakeboating, and has heard from many on both sides of the issue, but we feel that the proposed options permitting wakeboats on inland lakes will **SIMPLY NOT WORK**. Our inland lakes are just too small and popular with other traditional users to avoid major conflicts. We are keenly aware of the safety issues with canoeists, kayakers, and paddle boarders and the occasional conflicts with much smaller wakes produced by much smaller boats. We agree with many of the excellent comments you have received concerning the water quality and habitat impacts as well as the difficulty in complying with and enforcing the proposed rulemaking.

Thank you again for your work on this issue and for the opportunity to comment.

Wallace McLean
Thomas Willard
Jeff Cueto
Ginny Garrison
Mike Kline
Richmond Hopkins
Ann Bove
Angela Shambaugh
Eric Smeltzer
Steve Fisk
Rich Langdon
Alan Quackenbush
Stephan Syz

and 12 other retirees from the DEC Watershed Management Division and former Water Quality Division

I was discouraged to hear there was an extension made for The extension was granted in response to a request from Woodard Marine, the wake boat dealer located on Lake Bomoseen. I am in favor of support for STRENGTHENING the rules RESTRICTING the wake boats.

I am concerned about the environmental damage and the spread of invasive species to lakes that have been spared this far.

Keeping our lakes SAFE and CLEAN is crucial for tourism. I have nearly capsized from the wakes when I have been in a kayak. I am also a photographer so that would mean the destruction of my expensive equipment. It's also terrible for the fish and the loons! Not great for those trying to fish, either... another area important to tourism and Vermonters that pay taxes.

Please, please protect our lakes in favor of the greater good and not the smaller number of weaker boat owners that can go to larger bodies of water like the open lake on Lake Champlain or Winnepesaukee.

I am writing in support of the petition to ban wakesports at Waterbury Reservoir. Wakesports have a negative environmental impact that extends from the aquatic life to the shorelines and beyond. It is disruptive to fish and wildlife, and disruptive to individuals, particularly non-motorized recreation. I wholeheartedly support banning wakesports on the Waterbury Reservoir.

Wake boats have damaged our shoreline at Joe's Pond and made it impossible and/or dangerous at times for swimmers or boaters in smaller craft - even normally very stable pontoon boats - to operate. Even when staying within the prescribed limits, the wakes crash onshore and prevent others from enjoying our lake. 500 ft. is not enough. We need them gone from Joe's Pond.

I strongly support the strengthening of the amendment to the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. I am very passionate about swimmer and boater safety, invasive species spread, erosion issues, and impact to loons, fish, and other non-humans who rely on the Waterbury Reservoir to survive

As a Vermont lakefront property owner who engages in lake swimming, sailing, kayaking, and paddle boarding:

- I am in strong support of the strongest possible public safety regulations.
- I strongly support a wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written.
- I believe there should be no flexibility for a compromise that would permit even one wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover. The ecosystem and shoreline of Shadow Lake are already seriously compromised due to the condition of the dam and low water levels. Wakeboating and wakesurfing would result in catastrophic ecological damage and safety risks to swimmers and recreational users of unpowered watercraft.
- I support a minimum of 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and all other lake users and loon nesting sites. I would prefer 1000' safety buffer.
- In summary, I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake--which is too small for even one wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Samuel S. Holland
sholland@smu.edu
214-354-7416

Proposed rule does not go far enough. It should NOT allow wake boats on Harvey Lake for two main reasons. 1) TOO SMALL! and 2) Virtually NO LAW there! Wake boats should not be allowed on any body of water without law enforcement present to protect the public!

The rules will be a joke on a wild west lake.

Please stop large wake boats from using Joe's Pond. It will ruin it. There's plenty of large lakes for these large boats!!!! It's just "common sense".

Hello, I am a longtime property owner in Westmore and would like to express my concern regarding a potential change in wakeboard rules that could affect Willoughby lake. I am opposed to wakeboard use on VT lakes for the reason's below.

Wakeboard and wakesurfing boats produce high energy waves and intense propeller turbulence that, unlike standard boats, reach deep into the lake bed. These large wakes cause severe shoreline erosion, destroyed aquatic plant habitats, and stir up bottom sediments, releasing nutrients like phosphorus that trigger toxic alge blooms and degrade water quality.

Wakeboard boats also destroyed habitats for small fish, and loon nest

There large wakes are very dangerous for swimmers, paddle boarders and canoes.

Worst of all is to create the large wakes the wakeboats must fill there ballast with water that could come from other lakes that are infested with invasive species. Then dump that water in Willoughby as they leave. That could ruin Willoughby lake forever.

Keep Wakeboarding off Willoughby Lake!!

I am writing to urge ANR/DEC to please consider the impact that wake surfing boats has on small inland lakes/ponds in Vermont. We have many pristine lakes/ponds that if wake boating was allowed on would significantly harm the lakes from shoreline erosion, safety to the "normal" users of the lakes, and potential for spreading AIS including Eurasian Water Milfoil. Wakeboats were made for "surfing" and surfing has historically been on ocean waves. They produce ocean like waves that are not safe for small lakes/ponds. I understand the Wakeboat industry and owners are pushing for lesser or no rules and also to keep the 200 foot minimum in place but this does not make sense. Many studies have all stated that the minimum is 500' or more to protect these smaller lakes. I am from Joe's Pond and we know the damage and disruption that wake boats cause. Even when operating in the legal limits as set forth in current State rulings, the wakes are large and dangerous to smaller crafts, swimmers, and shorelines. They stir up and disrupt natural vegetation and will continue the spread of the dreaded eurasian water milfoil that we are attempting to control. One must understand how important it is to keep wake surfing by these large wake boats from damaging our waterfront properties and churning up the lake bottom that can seriously damage the ecosystem and can spread invasive species like eurasian water milfoil. Please do not lower the standards as currently proposed.

Thank You

Richard Gagne

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

My name is Larry Riegert and I am providing my comments in support of the revised proposed rules concerning wakeboats. My wife and I own a camp on 68 Edgewood Ave, which is located on the south side of the larger pond and directly adjacent to the authorized area for wakeboat operation. We have witnessed firsthand the impact of wakeboats on our shoreline and the subsequent erosion on our rock wall. More concerning is the safety issues involved with unanticipated large waves on individuals who are swimming, kayaking, and paddle boarding. We have seen several of our grandchildren being overcome with these large and unexpected waves.

There are only a couple of wakeboat owners on Joe's Pond compared to 270+/- property owners. Since the new regulation went into effect, it appears that all these boat owners are trying to work within the new restricted space. However, the waves generated and their impact on the shoreline and individuals seem the same compared to previous years. Joe's Pond is too small for these boats.

Thank you for considering the petition and reviewing my comments.

Larry Riegert
68 Edgewood Ave
West Danville, VT

109 Allen Dr
Milton, VT

Strongly support the amendment to ban wake boats from Waterbury reservoir

No matter how many submissions are made by wakeboat owners attempting to gerrymander this issue, the bottom line is they are just 1% of those of us who boat on our Vermont inland lakes and wish to preserve our waters, shorelines, properties and traditional lifestyle. And safely continue to swim and boat as usual.....

I support stronger public safety regulations.

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I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

I have a camp on Sunset Lake in Benson, Vermont. I have recently retired from the board of the lake association which I served on for 6 years, 4 of them as president. For the past several years the issue of regulating wake boats in Vermont has been a point of interest for many people here. In my many talks with all different types of people, lake front property owners, local users of the lake and local politicians, I have yet to come upon a single person who thinks wake boats should be allowed on Sunset lake. It is a very small peaceful lake where the predominant recreational activities are swimming, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, sailing and paddle boarding. There are a few resident motor boats and occasionally a local puts in a motorized boat for fishing and these have never been a problem. Wake boats on the other hand would destroy the peace and interfere with all the prior listed recreational activities. In addition the lake is so small that the rebounding of waves off the shore would be intensified compared to larger lakes as the relationship of circumference to area is not a linear one. Thank you Vermont for your open government and diligence.

am a long-time property owner in Westmore and would like to express my concern regarding a potential change in wakeboard rules that could affect Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes. I strongly oppose wakeboard use on VT lakes for the following reasons.

Wakeboards and wakesurfing boats are unhealthy for lakes because they produce massive, high-energy waves and intense propeller turbulence that, unlike standard boats, reach deep into the lake bed. These large wakes cause severe shoreline erosion, destroy aquatic plant habitats, and stir up bottom sediments, releasing nutrients like phosphorus that trigger harmful algal blooms and degrade water quality.

Sediment Resuspension: The heavy ballast and powerful propellers of wake boats (which can weigh up to 5,000 lbs) churn up mud and sediment from the bottom, even in depths of 15-25 feet. This reduces water clarity and stirs up nutrients that cause excessive, sometimes toxic, algae blooms.

Shoreline Erosion and Property Damage: Wake boat waves are up to twice as high and have four times the energy of other boats, accelerating the erosion of shorelines and damaging docks and, in some cases, harming loon nests.

Habitat Destruction: The intense turbulence and wave energy damage or uproot aquatic plants, which are crucial for protecting the shoreline and providing habitats for young fish and other wildlife.

Safety Risks: The large waves created can be dangerous to smaller vessels like kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards.

Invasive Species Spreading: The increased water circulation and ability to hold water in ballast tanks can accelerate the spread of aquatic invasive species.

KEEP WAKEBOARDING OFF LAKE WILLOUGHBY!

As a lifelong lover (90 plus years) and year round resident (40 ears) of Lake Fairlee, I support the proposed changes. Wake boats do not belong on lakes that have summer camps and ongoing infestations of milfoil. My extended family love this area and hope you vote to preserve its special beauty for generations to come.

I am a long-time property owner in Westmore and would like to express my concern regarding a potential change in wakeboard rules that could affect Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes. I strongly oppose wakeboard use on VT lakes for the following reasons.

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Wakeboards and wakesurfing boats are unhealthy for lakes

Sediment Resuspension:

Shoreline Erosion and Property Damage:

Habitat Destruction:

Safety Risks:

Invasive Species Spreading:

KEEP WAKEBOARDING OFF LAKE WILLOUGHBY!

The location of the allowed wakeboat section on Waterbury Reservoir is way too dangerous. You have paddlers/motorboats launching from both the state park and the busy dam launch area. Paddlers and motorboaters coming from the east from Blush Hill and the state park launch access over there. The proposed WB section is right in the middle of that busy intersection. The big waves produced by the WB will be an accident waiting to happen.

As a homeowner who lives fulltime on the shores of Lake Fairlee, I believe strongly that it is high time to enact these changes that benefit and protect the interests of the vast majority of people who wish to use the lake for a variety of safe, quiet pursuits. Not to do so would be to favor the tiny minority of those who want to engage in wakesports that endanger the uses of the majority and the health of our lakes.

I support strengthening the amendment of the 2024 Use of Public Waters Rule. The Waterbury reservoir and our other inland water bodies are a valued recreational resource and already busy enough as it is and I'm concerned about swimmer and boater safety, erosion increased by wavesports and impact to wildlife co-existing on the water of Waterbury Reservoir and other smaller resources. Please don't allow wakesports at Waterbury reservoir!! Thank you.

Please enact at least your proposed rule changes for the upcoming boating season. I would prefer stronger rules including increasing the minimum depth to 30 feet to avoid lake bottom disturbance to anticipate the more powerful wake boats which are surely on the way. Thank you.

Please increase the distance from shore and other people and boaters to 700 feet to increase the safety of the vast majority of lake users. Thank you.

Please protect the nesting loons by enacting your proposed rule changes; I would prefer that the distance for this be increased to 700 feet in anticipation of the newer, more powerful wake boats. Thank you.

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) talks extensively about the promotion of watercraft. I agree that they should be proud of their success, but they make very few statements that promote protecting the lakes, ponds, shorelines, lake bottoms, wildlife or other sensitive areas, including the water itself. For them it's all amount money.

I am AGAINST wakeboarding on Vermont lakes. If we are all AWAKE to the harms of wakeboarding I know that we can all take a stance against wakeboarding too. Wakeboarding will be incredibly damaging to the environment of the lake itself, the humans that rely on the health and safety of the lake, and the animals and natural habitats reliant on the health and safety of the lake. The waves created by cause severe shoreline erosion and significantly degrade water quality, can cause toxic algae blooms that would pose a health risk to the many children and adults that swim in these lakes. Additionally the enormity of lake board waves can damage both natural habitats and property in addition to creating danger for smaller vessels like kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards. Furthermore the increased water circulation and ability to hold water in ballast tanks can accelerate the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Wakeboards and wakesurfing boats are unhealthy for lakes because they produce massive, high-energy waves and intense propeller turbulence that, unlike standard boats, reach deep into the lake bed. These large wakes cause severe shoreline erosion, destroy aquatic plant habitats, and stir up bottom sediments, releasing nutrients like phosphorus that trigger harmful algal blooms and degrade water quality.

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Habitat Destruction: The intense turbulence and wave energy damage or uproot aquatic plants, which are crucial for protecting the shoreline and providing habitats for young fish and other wildlife.

Safety Risks: The large waves created can be dangerous to smaller vessels like kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards.

Invasive Species Spreading: The increased water circulation and ability to hold water in ballast tanks can accelerate the spread of aquatic invasive species.

KEEP WAKEBOARDING OFF LAKE WILLOUGHBY!

D.R. Eric Chittenden
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PERSONAL COMMENTS FOR MY 2/27/26 COMMENTS & VOTE

Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) needs our (Vermont Citizens) support to make and take, bold, meaningful, best lake protection measures possible for the lakes, habitats and wildlife that cannot speak for themselves.

This is no time to hesitate. We have been working on this for years. It is time for lake users, lake residents, citizens, and ANR to unite in crafting the best, strongest Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) regulations and Use of Public Waters guidelines as possible. Failure to do this could ultimately, and not far down the road, leave us with many "dead" lakes. ANR knows what must be done. Let's provide them with the tools they need, and then allow them to do their work. AIS often occupy and dominate lakes quickly. Once there, they own the lake. I grew up on a dairy farm near Burlington. Local lakes and ponds, including the shorelines of Lake Champlain are beyond saving. Since zebra mussels were introduced to Lake Champlain about 60 years ago, swimming, walking along the beach or into the water has become very unpleasant. As we all are aware, Lake Champlain now has 51 AIS.

I have over 60 years of experience as a merchant mariner around the world – retiring as a licensed captain on the largest ships in the world.

Several of the very same aquatic microorganisms, pathogens, and invasive species exist in both oceans and inland lakes around the world and in the U.S., including here in Vermont..

- Do world countries take these potential infestations seriously? The answer is a resounding YES!
- In 2004 countries gathered, and International Ballast Water Regulations were adopted, and then entered into force globally on September 8, 2017.
- Core Objective: To minimize the transfer of aquatic organisms and pathogens via ballast water and sediments – similar to issues facing wakeboats.
- Performance Standards known as D-1 Standard (Exchange): Requires exchanging ballast water at least 200 nautical miles from land and in 200+ meters depth (about 600 feet). This requirement alone speaks to the awareness and urgency for action of world agencies.
- There are exceptions in some situations where 200 nautical miles from land and 200 meters depth cannot be met.
- The "Core Objective" is to minimize the transfer of aquatic organisms and pathogens via ballast water – similar to issues that wakesports boats have.
- Conversely, and unfortunately, here in Vermont, despite spoken assurances from several pro-wakesports speakers at ANR's 1/27/26 hearing, many Lake Bomoseen residents during last week's ANR Hearing suggested that it was highly unlikely that wakeboats were responsible for introducing AIS to Lake Bomoseen. However, later that evening when I researched AIS in Lake Bomoseen, I discovered that the lake has, by far, more AIS than any other Vermont inland lake. If that prevailing attitude carries the day, we are headed for a multiple lakes AIS disaster. Not one of my early swimming beaches on Lake Champlain, including Queen City Park, are swimmable or walkable without rubber boots and other protection. Are we willing to allow this to happen to our inland lakes? We have nine grandchildren. Five of them live near the reservoir. All of them support keeping AIS out of the Waterbury Reservoir.

- It is important to engage these invasive boats and their users now. I'm not willing to believe that they

simply do not care. The industry has been cavalier about developing an after-market system to kill AIS in their ballast tanks.

It's simple, say:

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts.

Sign, submit and done.

Charles Ross

1762 Shadow Lake Road

Glover, VT 05839

I am a long-time property owner in Westmore and would like to express my concern regarding a potential change in wakeboard rules that could affect Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes. I strongly oppose wakeboard use on VT lakes for the following reasons.

Wakeboards and wakesurfing boats are unhealthy for lakes because they produce massive, high-energy waves and intense propeller turbulence that, unlike standard boats, reach deep into the lake bed. These large wakes cause severe shoreline erosion, destroy aquatic plant habitats, and stir up bottom sediments, releasing nutrients like phosphorus that trigger harmful algal blooms and degrade water quality.

Sediment Resuspension: The heavy ballast and powerful propellers of wake boats (which can weigh up to 5,000 lbs) churn up mud and sediment from the bottom, even in depths of 15-25 feet. This reduces water clarity and stirs up nutrients that cause excessive, sometimes toxic, algae blooms.

Shoreline Erosion and Property Damage: Wake boat waves are up to twice as high and have four times the energy of other boats, accelerating the erosion of shorelines and damaging docks and, in some cases, harming loon nests.

Habitat Destruction: The intense turbulence and wave energy damage or uproot aquatic plants, which are crucial for protecting the shoreline and providing habitats for young fish and other wildlife.

Safety Risks: The large waves created can be dangerous to smaller vessels like kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards.

Invasive Species Spreading: The increased water circulation and ability to hold water in ballast tanks can accelerate the spread of aquatic invasive species.

KEEP WAKEBOARDING OFF LAKE WILLOUGHBY!

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I am writing in support of the proposed changes to the Vermont Use of Public Waters (VUPW) rules.

I regularly use the Waterbury Reservoir for kayaking and swimming. It is one of the region's most accessible and scenic public waters, and I value it as a place for quiet recreation, exercise, and connection to nature. From that perspective, I strongly support the proposed revisions that would clarify that Waterbury Reservoir is not eligible for wakesports now or in the future. The proposal would ensure that they cannot be authorized there going forward by tightening the eligibility criteria for wakesports zones. I believe this is a prudent and necessary step.

My primary concern is swimmer and small-craft safety.

The Reservoir is heavily used in the summer by families, children, paddlers, anglers, and open-water swimmers. Kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards sit low in the water and are particularly vulnerable to large artificial wakes. Even traditional motorboat wakes can create challenging conditions in certain areas; the much larger and more persistent wakes associated with wakesports would significantly increase risk.

Waterbury Reservoir has a relatively confined shape, multiple access points, and substantial near-shore activity. Swimmers often use coves and shoreline areas that feel protected, yet wakes can travel far beyond the boat's path and reflect off shorelines, creating unpredictable and chaotic water conditions. In a busy summer setting, the interaction of large wakes with recreational congestion would narrow the margin for safety considerably.

From direct experience, I have seen paddlers forced to brace to avoid capsizing during periods of heavy motorized boat traffic. Introducing a use specifically designed to generate larger waves would amplify that risk.

Public water policy should prioritize preventing foreseeable hazards. The proposed changes recognize that wakesports require substantial depth, width, and buffer from shore to minimize impacts. If Waterbury Reservoir does not meet those more protective criteria, it is appropriate that it not be considered a suitable location for that activity.

This is not an argument against motorized boating or against wakesports where they can be accommodated safely. It is an argument for matching higher-impact activities to waterbodies that can safely support them without compromising the experience and safety of others.

Waterbury Reservoir serves a broad public: campers, hikers, anglers, families, and non-motorized boaters. Maintaining a safer and calmer environment supports equitable access for a wide range of users, including older residents, children, and those new to paddling or swimming.

As someone who relies on the Reservoir regularly for kayaking and swimming, I appreciate the Department's effort to revisit and strengthen the rules. Clarifying that wakesports will not be permitted on Waterbury Reservoir helps protect public safety and preserve the character of this important shared resource.

I urge adoption of the proposed changes.

Sincerely,
Joe Camaratta

Please do not allow a small number of wakeboat enthusiasts to degrade our beautiful lakes and diminish the ability of Vermont residents and visitors to swim, kayak, canoe, and enjoy the quiet beauty of the lakes and their loons.

Wake boating should be an "opt in" issue on all public waters in Vermont. It should be banned unless communities vote to allow it. Period. The environmental impacts are significant and the idea that just because people can buy thrilling toys, does not give them the right to use them on public lands, waters or air space.

Wakeboats in operation are dangerous and destructive, their ballast (local lake water) is near impossible to inspect, clean, or verify. Wakeboats in operation near any other craft or shore are disruptive and dangerous. They need to be relegated to safe, deep, bodies of water and keep a lot of distance.

I support the rule

I am a frequent user of the Waterbury Reservoir for camping, paddle-boarding and kayaking, and I experience it as its best when the water is calm and quiet. In practice, high-speed motorized activity creates safety concerns for swimmers and paddlers, disrupts the peaceful character of the reservoir, and diminishes the shared enjoyment of this public resource. While I recognize the importance of balancing a range of recreational opportunities, the Waterbury Reservoir is particularly well-suited to low-impact, non-motorized use, and would benefit from even stronger regulation.

I support the proposed updates to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules because they provide clearer, more protective standards for where wake sports can occur and better reflect the physical and ecological limits of smaller, multi-use water bodies. These changes will help reduce shoreline erosion, limit the risk of invasive species spread, and protect water quality. They also acknowledge the needs of wildlife—such as loons, fish, and other species—that rely on the reservoir's relatively undisturbed habitat to survive.

By prioritizing safety, ecological health, and compatibility of uses, the proposed rule changes help preserve the Waterbury Reservoir as a place where people can more safely paddle, swim, fish, and enjoy a quieter connection with the water. I appreciate the DEC's thoughtful, science-based approach and strongly support the proposed revisions.

Willoughby is a precious resource. Please preserve it!

We support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boat and swimmer safety and shoreline erosion.

As a concerned resident and frequent camper/ paddler on VT lakes, I am writing to strongly urge the implementation of more stringent regulations—or an outright prohibition—on wake-enhanced boating activities in our state's inland lakes. While I understand the appeal of new recreational technologies, the unique design of wakeboats poses an existential threat to the environmental health, public safety, and equitable shared use of Vermont's fragile aquatic ecosystems.

Unlike traditional motorboats, wakeboats are engineered to maximize wave height, often producing swells of 3 to 5 feet. These "artificial ocean waves" carry a level of energy that Vermont's narrow, glacially carved lakes were never meant to absorb.

The scientific and anecdotal evidence is clear: these massive wakes accelerate shoreline erosion at an alarming rate. Property owners across lakes like Joes Pond and Lake Raponda have reported significant loss of sand, soil, and rock, which washes back into the water, increasing turbidity and disrupting water quality. Furthermore, the powerful downward thrust of wakeboat propellers—designed to push the hull deep into the water—stirs up bottom sediment in depths up to 20 or 30 feet. This reintroduces phosphorus and other nutrients into the water column, fueling the cyanobacterial (blue-green algae) blooms that have plagued lakes like Lake Morey in recent years.

Vermont has invested millions of dollars in Access Greeter programs and decontamination stations to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) like Eurasian watermilfoil. Wakeboats represent a major loophole in these efforts. Their internal ballast tanks can hold hundreds of gallons of water, which is nearly impossible to fully drain or inspect. When a wakeboat moves from an infested waterbody to a pristine one, it carries a "biological ticking time bomb" in its hull, undermining the tireless work of local lake associations.

Vermont's lakes are home to sensitive nesting waterfowl, most notably the Common Loon. Loons nest at the water's edge, often on tiny islands or hummocks just inches above the surface. A single 4-foot wake from a boat 500 feet away can swamp a nest, drowning eggs and destroying a year's worth of reproductive effort. The current 500-foot buffer rule is insufficient; many experts and the group Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes advocate for a minimum 1,000-foot distance to allow these waves enough room to dissipate safely.

The primary mission of Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules is to manage use conflicts. Currently, wakeboats are "dominating" these spaces to the exclusion of others.

Small Craft Safety: Kayakers, canoeists, and paddleboarders are frequently swamped or capsized by unexpected wakeboat swells.

Children and Swimmers: Residents have reported having to "rescue" children and pets from the shoreline when massive waves approach. Open-water swimmers, who are often nearly invisible to high-speed boaters, are particularly vulnerable to being tossed by these silent, high-energy waves.

Property Damage: Wakes are slamming moored boats into docks and pulling out pilings, causing thousands of dollars in private property damage.

Vermont's brand is built on "green" stewardship and natural outdoor experiences. Allowing wakeboats on small, vulnerable lakes, as one resident put it, like "someone smoking a cigar in a crowded room". I urge the ANR to adopt the 1,000-foot buffer requirement at a minimum, or better yet, to prohibit wake-enhancement technology on all inland lakes under 1,000 acres to ensure these waters remain safe, clean, and accessible for future generations.

Please do not allow wake boats on Lake Willoughby. It is a NEK treasure, and its beauty and peacefulness will be forever changed and ultimately destroyed if it becomes over run with wake boats. The existing wild life, especially loons, and many "gentle boaters" (ie. kayakers and paddle boarders) will be evermore challenged to survive if wake boats are allowed on our lake. I have been a longtime homeowner on Lake Willoughby, and my extended family has been visiting for over 100 years. Our hope and wish is it remains unspoiled. We have seen a large influx of visitors to our beautiful lake, bringing with it additional traffic and noise. We do not need large, wake bearing boats out on the water disrupting what has been enjoyable for several generations.

I reside with my husband on Sunset Lake in Benson Vt. I have been following the process that ANR has been taking to address the need for good (strong) and appropriate regulations for wake sports. Sunset Lake (Benson) is fortunately one of Vermont's Lakes that the DEC has restricted Personal Watercrafts from using. Why would the DEC/ANR consider allowing wakesports on any of Vermont lakes that currently are restricted for PWC use?

It is undeniable that wakesport activities damage lake ecosystems and water quality. This damage is unavoidable even with responsible use of wakeboats in wakesport mode. One of ANR's stated goals is to create regulations that will protect the public's use and safety (and enjoyment?) of Vermont's water bodies. Large waves created during wakesports will ruin the enjoyment of all other forms of lake recreation.

Thank you for your efforts. Please try to expedite your regulations so that they can be in place for the 2026 boating season!

The White Birch Lodge has been offering recreational opportunities to residents and tourists since the early 1900s; our family has owned this cottage rental business since 1980. I believe the approval of wake sports on Echo Lake in East Charleston would result in a negative impact on our business. Echo is a small lake, and wake sports on this lake would easily result in hazardous conditions for children, adults and wildlife. My visitors, many repeating for over ten years, come to enjoy the quiet options of the area: long distance and recreational swimming, kayaking, canoeing, observation of resident loons, fishing, photography, etc.

Another consideration: the taxes resulting from this business also go to the state's Meals & Rooms tax. Please do not allow the introduction of wake sports to threaten these experiences on Echo Lake. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

My name is Catherine Simonson. My husband and I purchased lakeshore property on Lake Parker seven years ago after searching extensively for a seasonal home on a quiet lake in the Northeast Kingdom. We treasure the beauty, tranquility as well as the recreational opportunities this very special small lake affords us which prompts me to write this letter regarding DEC's new proposed rules regarding wake boat use in Vermont lakes.

I support the DEC 2025 revisions with specific attention to the wakesports zone definition. The expansion of the lake acreage from 50 acres to 100 acres is a big improvement as well as the longer required distance for wake sport run of 3,000 ft. Extending the buffer from other lake users is very important to us primarily for safety as well as promoting enjoyable recreation.

At the same time, we would like to see consideration for an expansion of the required depth requirement from 20 feet to 30 feet to protect lake bottoms. There is more research to indicate that 700 feet rather than 500 feet would be the appropriate distance from shoreline and loon nests especially considering new more powerful wake boats.

Thank you in advance for reviewing and considering my feedback.

Catherine Simonson
Catherines2@comcast.net
Lake Parker Association Member
Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes

Invasive Species Risk: Wakeboat ballast tanks can hold up to 8.5 gallons of residual water even after draining, which may harbor zebra mussel larvae or watermilfoil. Because current "Home Lake" rules—which intended to limit a boat to a single lake per year—are being replaced by decontamination requirements that are difficult to enforce at all access points, pristine lakes like Seymour remain highly vulnerable.

Shoreline Erosion: Studies indicate that wakeboat waves require 425–600 feet to dissipate to the energy levels of standard motorboats. The current 500-foot buffer may not be enough to prevent significant erosion, especially as newer, heavier boats enter the market.

Impact on Wildlife: Large wakes can swamp the nests of loons, a species that has recently seen breeding success on Seymour.

I am concerned about the proposed use of wake boats at the Lake. I am concerned the boats will change the quality of life in the lake. Also the disruption from the waves and noise for people on the shore.

Given the fragile nature of Lake Parker, in the town of Glover, and many other lakes and ponds in Vermont, I support the DEC's proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules and Wakesports which includes increasing the offsets between wake sports and other recreational users, as well as a revision of the wakesports zones, among other changes.

I also believe the Home Lake Rule should continue to be included and feel, further, that it would be beneficial to lake ecology if the depth of operation of wake boats in wake sports mode were increased to 30 feet from 20 feet to reduce the risk of bottom scouring of lakes.

I urge you to strengthen the regulations for wake boats on our lakes. Please do not cave to the pressure from companies that sell wake boats. Protecting the ecosystems of our lakes is not their priority; selling more wake boats and making wake boating as easy as possible are their top priorities.

Safety for all boaters and swimmers, and the preservation of our lakes' ecosystems must be our focus as responsible Vermont citizens. The regulations must be strengthened even beyond the current proposals if we want our children and grandchildren to enjoy the lakes as we have known them. All you have to do is look to NH lakes to see the devastation that has taken place in a state that has not regulated wake boats effectively.

To the Agency of Natural Resources,

I am writing to comment on the proposed wakesports rule change that would require wakeboats to stay 500 feet away from all other users on the water. I strongly oppose this new rule.

Vermont already has clear and effective standards in place: all motorboats must stay 200 feet from other users, and wakeboats in wakesports mode must operate 500 feet from shore. These rules are understandable, enforceable, and well-communicated. Adding a wakeboat-specific 500-foot user buffer would create two different 500-foot rules on the lake—one from the shore and one from people—and that will cause significant confusion for boaters, paddlers, and even law enforcement.

A 500-foot moving buffer would also create a 1,000-foot exclusion zone around a single wakeboat. Many Vermont lakes simply cannot accommodate a moving safety circle of that size, and this rule would effectively eliminate wakesports on waters where no safety problems currently exist.

The State already considers 200 feet a safe operating distance between motorboats and other users. There has been no clear evidence showing that wakeboats require a separate and much larger user buffer, especially when existing laws for negligent operation, speed, and safe separation already cover every type of vessel on the water.

Wakeboats, when operated responsibly, share Vermont's lakes safely with paddlers, anglers, and other boaters. I respectfully ask the Agency to remove the proposed 500-foot user buffer from this rule and maintain the current system that Vermonters already understand and follow.

Thank you for considering my comments.

To whom it may concern ,

My name is John Feldkamp and I live in Saint Johnsbury, I frequent many lakes of the lakes in Vermont as an avid angler, recreational boater and outdoor enthusiast. I'm writing to oppose the proposed rule requiring wakeboats to stay 500 feet away from all other users on the water.

Right now, Vermont's system is clear:

- all motorboats stay 200 feet from other users, and
- wakeboats in wakesports mode stay 500 feet from shore.

These rules are simple, enforceable, and widely understood. Adding another 500-foot rule—this one applying to people instead of shore—creates confusion for everyone on the lake. Most boaters will not be able to tell which 500 feet applies in which situation.

A 500-foot moving buffer also creates a 1,000-foot exclusion area, which would make wakesports impossible on many lakes, even those with no history of safety problems. The State already considers 200 feet a safe distance between motorboats and other users, and the existing laws on negligent operation and safe boating already address safety concerns.

Please remove the proposed 500-foot user buffer from the rule. The current system works and is far clearer for boaters and enforcement.

Thank you,
John S. Feldkamp

Dear ANR,

As a person who boats regularly in Vermont, I would like to comment on the 500-foot wakeboat buffer. I do not support the new rule because it will become difficult and confusing for all boaters.

This change will be nearly impossible for boaters or wardens to judge on the water. We already have a clear system: 200 feet from users for all boats, and 500 feet from shore for a wakeboat in wakesport mode. This new change, 500-foot rule, that applies differently depending on the vessel type will only create confusion and inconsistent enforcement.

Please remove the proposed 500-foot user buffer and keep Vermont's boating rules clear and workable for all to enjoy.

Thank you for your time,

Erica

I am VERY CONCERNED about NOT HAVING "THE HOME LAKE RULE" with REAL DECONTAMINATION required for access in any of the wake sports lakes. REASONING: We at Willoughby Lake have HAD boats coming down from CANADA due to expensive DAILY and weekly launching fees in CANADA. We know that there are definitely Zebra Mussels in various areas of Lake Memphremagog as in DEC Invasive species information. They come down and launch into Willoughby and I'd think other of the lakes and LAUNCH FOR NO FEE AND POTENTIALLY BRING US "POISON PILLS" a/k/a Zebra Mussels !!! With these Zebra Mussels "on our doorstep", maybe we need to REQUIRE ANY CANADIAN BOAT TO BE DECONTAMINATED with a Certificate and as they cross any border station, they should be told that as a courtesy.

I am a homeowner on Lake Willoughby. I support the current rules changes with strong caveats that they be significantly strengthened. Ideally, no inland lakes in Vermont, including Willoughby, should allow wakeboats.

- Willoughby is a NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK. It's status is specifically tied to its pristine waters and beautiful natural environment that can be enjoyed by residents and tourists without impinging on the enjoyment of either category.

- Wake boats are a sport that is enjoyed by a SMALL MINORITY of the population. Compared to the full-time and summer residents, the impact of wake boats is out of proportion to what those residents want to allow on their lakes.

- While my initial concerns about allowing wake boats on Willoughby and Vermont lakes, which have NOT abated, referred to noise, shoreline damage, and safety for other boaters and swimmers, my primary focus has shifted to ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.

- INVASIVE SPECIES are spreading across the planet. Two of the most damaging are zebra and quagga mussels that have completely changed the ecology of the great lakes. Our primary residence is in Michigan, and we have seen first hand the damage to shorelines, beaches and native species of fish caused by these mussels. Another non-native species, the Round Goby was introduced into the great lakes and has had some effect in reducing by eating zebra mussels, but they have a limited effect.

- Ballast tanks in wake boats that come to Vermont lakes from bodies of water such as the St. Lawrence Seaway and Lake Memphremagog will almost surely bring zebra mussels and quagga mussels to our lakes. Once they are here, we will not be able to eliminate them and the pristine nature of our lakes will be permanently altered.

- Willoughby is right across the border from and a major destination for Canadian tourists who swim, boat, kayak, paddle board and ski on our lake. Wake boats have already begun to come to Willoughby and we expect that to increase significantly once Willoughby becomes widely known as a wake boat destination.

- The HOME LAKE RULE was a step in the right direction, but it has been eliminated. The proposed requirement to have HOT WATER DECONTAMINATION of ballast tanks is a good one, but adds significantly to the staffing, monitoring and equipment costs that will burden the small communities where these lakes are located.

- FINANCIAL BURDEN - Westmore is a small town with limited funds, despite the size of its lake. It's tax burden is already very high. Our greeter program, which is partly funded by donations, consists of one person in a shack that inspects boats coming into and out of the lake for limited hours on the weekend. This program was developed to ensure that the one invasive species we already have, European milfoil, is not transmitted into our out of our lake. Wake boat decontamination would require additional facilities, staff and staffing hours during the week and on weekends to handle the much more extensive inspection and treatment of these boats.

- STATE FUNDING must be provided on an ongoing, not just one-time, basis to assist communities where wake boats are permitted. This funding must cover the additional decontamination equipment, facilities, staff and staffing hours required to keep our lake safe from invasive species.

- STATE INSPECTORS should come on a regular basis to ensure that wake boat owners are complying with the regulations, ideally once a week during the weekend. Westmore does not have any funds or staff with sufficient authority to enforce boat owners to comply. Without such funding, the new regulation becomes meaningless because it cannot be realistically enforced.

- Thank you for your time.

I support the VT ANR's proposed changes to the Use of Public Water Rules and Wakesports as I believe they will reduce the likelihood of furthering negative ecological impacts on Lake Parker located in Glover, VT.

Presently Lake Parker's watershed is categorized as highly disturbed according to the Vermont lake scorecard which speaks to the current health of the lake and its watershed. The water quality of the lake is considered to be stressed with high levels of phosphorous and chlorophyll. There are no aquatic invasives presently in the lake.

Knowing this information, and being aware of the impacts of wake boats operating in wake sports mode, I think it is imperative that the strongest rules be put in place to protect lake quality and prohibiting the use of these vessels on this and other small lakes in VT.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts on this matter.

Rumor has it that the ANR extended the public comment deadline as a concession to people who stand to gain financially from wakeboat sales. A private meeting, granted to wakeboat proponents, representatives of the wakeboat industry, DEC/ANR and Governor Scott's office has caused consternation within groups expecting the ANR to follow through with the proposed regulations controlling wakesport activities. Regulations that will then be sent to LCAR for consideration and that need to be apolitical or at least of bipartisan agreement. If Governor Scott's "finger is on the scale" of ANR's decision process it amounts to grossly unfair pressure being applied to decision makers who should only be acting under the guidelines stipulated under DEC and ANR's stated mission. Likewise, persons associated with financial gain within the wakeboat industry should not be allowed to influence ANR's regulations and the quantifications attached to the regulations.

The proposed wakesport regulation changes shared by the ANR are all necessary. Many supporters of your proposed changes wish that they were stronger or included suggestions as listed below:

1). Required water depth should be 30 feet.

This is based on recent data for studies conducted in other states. And can also be justified by the fact that wakeboat manufacturers are now advertising wakeboats that are more powerful and heavier than current wakeboats. The turbulent tornado like water blast from the prop wash spiraling downward to the lake bottom is capable of disturbing decades of sediment and phosphorus accumulation. The prop wash can also easily destroy fish nests and eggs and the delicate lake bottom ecosystem.

2). 100 acre minimum wakesport zones margins should not have sharp angles and should not encompass/surround "underwater islands". For an example of this concern please view the current wakesport zone as depicted on the DEC website map of Sunset Lake in Benson.

3). Because wakeboat manufactures are producing wakeboats capable of creating even larger waves, ANR should propose a limit on the size/weight/power of wakeboats allowed on Vermont waters. Just as large trucks are not allowed on certain Vermont roads and bridges.

4). Many lake recreationists would like to see wakeboats completely restricted from Vermont's lakes. Especially from lakes that they are not currently populated by wakeboats. Is that even a possibility?

5). Lakes that don't have greeters or state-owned boat launches should not be wake boat permitted lakes.

6). The home lake rule should be continued. This is needed at least until Vermont has adequate facilities in place that are able to decontaminate wakeboats in order to prevent the spread of AIS. By nature of their design wakeboats are a much higher risk for AIS transfer compared with other boat designs.

7). Lakes in Vermont should not allow wakesports during loon nesting season. From May 1st until July 31st. This suggestion is needed in order to protect Vermont's loon population. Loons were once an endangered species in Vt.

8). Wakeboats are not a normal use water vessel. Should they be allowed on Vermont waters without a normal use classification? Should any vessel capable of generating ocean sized waves that are even more damaging than those created by natural phenomenon ever be classified as normal?

Please act on finalizing your wakeboat regulations asap so that LCAR will be able to put laws into effect for this coming summer boating season.

Sincerely, Mark Johnston

In the "Vermont Invasive" information it has the News story as follows: Zebra Mussels Detected in United States Waters of Lake Memphremagog .

On another page specific to ZEBRA MUSSELS in the "MANAGEMENT OPTIONS" SECTION was the following: Once established, zebra and quagga mussel infestations are nearly impossible to eradicate. Many control options have been and are still being tried, but successful examples are limited. Complete draining of systems may succeed in killing off adult mussels, but any surviving larvae can quickly re-establish the population. Molluscides and other chemical and biological pesticides have demonstrated promise, but eliminating established populations is difficult. Typically, management efforts for zebra and quagga mussels are focused on preventing their spread to new waterbodies. (NOTE: The first and last sentence said it ALL to me. DON'T SPREAD IT TO NEW WATERS AS IT IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO ERADICATE. THEREFORE MEANING "REAL DECONTAMINATION MANDATORY"!!!! AND "HOME LAKE RULE "!!!! WHY WOULD WE NOT DO IT !!!!)

AND, on the same page ZEBRA MUSSELS in the "HOW YOU CAN HELP" SECTION was the following: For most aquatic invasive species, humans are the primary vector of transport from one waterbody to another. Many of these nuisance plants and animals can be unknowingly carried on fishing gear, boating equipment, or in very small amounts of water in a watercraft. Therefore, "MANDATORY REAL DECONTAMINATION" should do it.

AGAIN, I think this kind of covers it. NOW, "WE ALL" (including the State of VT) while "WE" still have a Pretty Clean Slate HAVE TO get our Act Together before "WE" have to play CATCH UP!

Public testimony at the recent Brandon and Barre DEC public meetings and written and oral comments from last summer's pre-rulemaking comment period indicate that a significant portion of organized opposition (possibly the majority) to the proposed amendments originates from stakeholders affiliated with a single lake, Lake Bomoseen. I urge the DEC to ensure the safety-related rule amendments remain as written: the 100-acre minimum Wake Sports Zone size, the 500 feet from other user operating distance, and the 3,000 ft run. These have been shaped by the needs of Vermont's most vulnerable waters rather than the interests of its largest inland lake. Lake Bomoseen is the lake least impacted by the proposed changes.

Key Considerations:

- **Disproportionate Scale:** At 2,400 acres, Lake Bomoseen is Vermont's largest inland lake. Its 1,000-acre-plus Wake Sports Zone (WSZ) is 12 times larger than the WSZs of Lake Fairlee and a dozen other lakes where wakesports would be prohibited under the proposed amendments.
- **Lake Size Dictates Impact:** Due to its vast operating area, the proportional impact of wakesports on Lake Bomoseen is negligible compared to smaller lakes. On smaller bodies of water, a limited area leads to increased user conflict, safety issues, and environmental strain.
- **Protection of Lake Users:** A regulatory framework that functions on a 2,400-acre lake cannot provide adequate safety for lake users on lakes a fraction of that size.

The Agency's mission to preserve and protect Vermont's natural resources requires standards that reflect the conditions of the state's most constrained waters. Statewide policy must protect the many, not just the preferences of stakeholders on the largest lake.

Thank you for your consideration.

I support the proposed Lake Rule amendments proposed by ANR. Vermont's lakes, their ecosystem, and their communities need protection from boat users, frequently from outside the town in which the lake is located, and also from out of state. Towns and communities deserve to have a voice in these decisions that directly affect their quality of life, and their community values. Rep. Herb Olson. Addison-4. Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton, Starksboro.

I support strong rules to limit wake sports and protect the lake ecosystems, shorelines, wildlife, and non motorized lake recreation.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted. I'm also concerned about AIS being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. AIS prevention is important, but the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you.

I live very near Lake Bomoseen in Vermont and use the lake primarily for canoeing and sailing. In 2016 I conducted a complete sonar survey of Lake Bomoseen that included water depths, bottom hardness and vegetation density. This survey was used, in part, by DEC to develop zones where wakeboarding is allowed on Lake Bomoseen. I am a degreed naval architect and marine engineer with over 60 years of experience designing ships and boats of all types and dealing with the adverse consequences of the wakes they produce on beaches, shoreline structures and other boats. Personally, I would support a complete ban of wakeboarding boats on all Vermont lakes because of their gross inefficiency. I do support the DEC proposed amendment prohibiting wakeboarding boats on smaller lakes as going at least part way toward the elimination of wakeboarding boats in Vermont.

Throughout my career I have endeavored to design ships and boats to be as efficient as current technology allows. This includes efficiency of propulsion through the water in order to minimize fuel consumption and associated air pollution. One indication of propulsion efficiency is the size of the wake the ship or boat produces: small wake - high efficiency, large wake - low efficiency. Wake boats are designed using various methods to increase their wake so a person can surf on the wave behind the boat. They do this at the expense of excessive fuel consumption, increased air pollution and damage to beaches, shoreline docks and moored boats and being dangerous to other boaters, especially canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards. Large waves are also a danger to swimmers and small children playing near the edges of beaches.

Legally, a boat operator is responsible for the damage caused by his wake. Historically, documenting boat wake damage and holding the responsible party liable is very difficult. However, there are very effective regulatory methods in place to prevent such damage; speed limits and no wake zones. Prohibiting wake boarding is the most effective regulatory method to protect lake shorelines and those who use them from damage and danger caused by excessive wakes.

I am not happy that Lake Bomoseen will be one of the lakes where wake boats are allowed. Maybe the next step towards eliminating these boats is to require their operators to prove, beyond doubt, that their boat ballast tanks are free of all invasive species before they are allowed to be launched in our lakes.

I am pleased that the new proposed regulations increase the wakesports zone to 1000 feet with a minimum of 500 feet safety buffer. Please do NOT decrease these limits. Anything less will not protect the shorelines or the swimmers, paddlers, and small fishing boats that are the most common uses on Lake Parker, where I have a home, and most other Vermont lakes. My small grandchildren "swim" with their hands on the bottom at the shallow end of the lake near our house. The summer of 2024 a wake boat visited our lake. The big waves I saw generated by the boat would have swamped the kids and anyone on a paddle board or kayak. Additionally, such waves stir up sediment at the bottom of our shallow lake bringing buried pollutants into the water. Please keep the home lake rule. The DEC has a mandate to protect the environment so take a "do no harm" approach. We have no way of hot water washing all boats on most of the lakes in the state. But just one wake boat could bring in invasive species creating a major problem very expensive to cure, if that is even possible.

I strongly support the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)-proposed amendment to strengthen the wakesports rule passed two years ago. By strengthening safeguards on where and how wake sports are conducted, this amendment will help reduce shoreline erosion, protect sensitive aquatic habitats, and preserve water quality for all users. I believe the proposed amendment will strike a better balance between legitimate recreational interests and the broader public interest in conserving Vermont's treasured lake ecosystems for future generations.

Dear Agency of Natural Resources and Department of Environmental Conservation,

I am writing as a Vermont resident and longtime user of our public waters to respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 expansion of the wakesports restrictions and to request that the State maintain the 2024 wake zone rule as currently written.

I use Vermont lakes in multiple ways throughout the season — sometimes behind the wheel of a boat, other times in a kayak or simply swimming with my family. From that real-world perspective, I strongly believe our lakes function best when policies reflect balanced, shared access grounded in measurable conditions rather than broad assumptions.

After reviewing the petition summaries and supporting materials, I was struck by the fact that a significant portion of the lakes cited in support of further restriction reported little to no established wakeboat activity. Where concerns are primarily anticipatory rather than based on documented conflict, expanding a statewide restriction appears premature. Good policy should respond to demonstrated patterns, not hypothetical ones.

I am also concerned about the mathematical foundation of the proposed 3,000-foot run combined with the 1,000-foot corridor width. The basic geometry is straightforward:

$$3,000 \text{ ft} \times 1,000 \text{ ft} = 3,000,000 \text{ square feet}$$
$$3,000,000 \div 43,560 = \text{approximately } 68.9 \text{ acres}$$

This figure is materially below the proposed 100-acre threshold. When a regulatory standard exceeds its own modeled footprint by roughly thirty percent, it raises reasonable questions about whether the least restrictive approach has truly been evaluated.

Equally important is implementation. The State adopted significant wakesports changes in 2024, yet many boating education channels have not fully integrated those requirements into formal instruction. Effective regulation depends on clear communication, consistent teaching, and coordinated enforcement. Before layering additional restrictions, it would be prudent to ensure the current framework is fully embedded in the State's own education and outreach systems.

I want to be clear: I support safe and responsible boating of all types. I also support protecting paddlers, anglers, swimmers, and shoreline resources. Those goals are shared across the boating community. However, the 2024 rule already represented a meaningful compromise that addressed depth, distance, and operational concerns while preserving reasonable access.

Rather than expanding statewide limitations at this time, I respectfully recommend the State maintain the 2024 rule and convene a structured multi-stakeholder roundtable that includes: paddlers, anglers, wakesports participants, lake associations, enforcement personnel, and Agency staff

A collaborative, data-driven monitoring process over the next several seasons would provide Vermont with real-world evidence across diverse lake conditions. That approach would strengthen public trust and ensure any future adjustments are clearly supported by documented need.

Vermont's public waters belong to everyone. Thoughtful, measured stewardship — not rapid expansion of restrictions — is the path most consistent with that principle.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Kenosh
Vermont Resident

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this comment as both a recreational paddler and a motorboat owner who spends significant time on Vermont waters each year. I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule expansion and urge the Agency to keep the 2024 wake zone framework in place while additional real-world evaluation occurs.

From my experience on the water, Vermont lakes already accommodate a wide variety of users successfully when everyone operates responsibly. The 2024 rule created clearer guardrails, and it deserves sufficient time to be fully implemented, taught, and observed before further statewide changes are made.

One issue that stands out to me is the reliance on limited petition data to justify a broad expansion. When reviewing the summaries, it appears that a majority of petition lakes either reported no wakeboats at all or only minimal presence. That context matters. Regulations should be proportional to demonstrated conditions, not driven primarily by precautionary concern.

The spatial assumptions behind the proposed acreage threshold also warrant careful review. Using the Agency's own conceptual corridor:

Run length: 3,000 feet

Width: 1,000 feet

Total area = 3,000,000 square feet

Converted to acres = approximately 68.9 acres

This is substantially less than the proposed 100-acre minimum. Even modest adjustments to speed assumptions produce smaller footprints. For example, at 10 mph for three minutes:

$10 \text{ mph} \times 3 \text{ minutes} \approx 2,640 \text{ feet}$

$2,640 \times 1,000 = 2,640,000 \text{ sq ft}$

$\approx 60.6 \text{ acres}$

These differences are not trivial. They directly affect which lakes remain available for shared use.

I am also concerned that the State's own boating education ecosystem has not fully incorporated the 2024 rule changes into standardized instruction. Major operational rules work best when they are clearly taught, consistently reinforced, and uniformly understood. Expanding restrictions before completing that integration risks creating confusion rather than compliance.

As someone who values Vermont's outdoor culture, I believe strongly in coexistence on the water. Most boaters, paddlers, and anglers simply want predictable rules and fair access. The 2024 rule moved the State meaningfully in that direction.

Instead of expanding the restrictions now, I encourage the Agency to:

Maintain the current 2024 framework

Fully integrate it into education and enforcement

Monitor documented conflicts over several seasons

Convene an open roundtable with stakeholders from all user groups

That collaborative path would produce better data, stronger public confidence, and more durable policy outcomes.

Thank you for considering my perspective, and thank you for allowing additional time to review all documents.

Respectfully,

Dan

Dear ANR and DEC Leadership,

I am writing as a Vermont angler and seasonal lake user who values both conservation and fair access to public waters. After reviewing the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments, I respectfully oppose expanding the current restrictions and instead support maintaining the 2024 wake zone rule while the State gathers more comprehensive real-world data.

I spend most of my time on the water fishing, often in a small motorboat or drifting quietly along shorelines. Because of that, I pay close attention to how different users interact. In my experience, the vast majority of boat operators — regardless of vessel type — make reasonable efforts to share space responsibly when clear rules exist.

What gives me pause about the proposed expansion is the apparent mismatch between documented activity levels and the scale of the statewide response. Many of the petition materials appear to reflect precautionary concerns on lakes where wakeboats were rarely or never observed. That distinction matters. Responsible regulation should be driven primarily by demonstrated patterns of conflict, not by the possibility that conflicts could occur someday.

The acreage modeling also raises legitimate questions. If the conceptual wakesports corridor is approximately 3,000 feet long and 1,000 feet wide, the math yields roughly 68.9 acres. Yet the proposed eligibility threshold is set at 100 contiguous acres. That represents a significant increase beyond the modeled footprint and could unnecessarily exclude lakes that otherwise function safely under the current rule.

From a practical standpoint, I would prefer the State first ensure that the 2024 rule is fully implemented and understood. Major operational rules work best when they are clearly taught through boating safety courses, reinforced by consistent messaging, and supported by predictable enforcement. Expanding restrictions before that foundation is fully in place risks creating confusion among the very users the State is trying to guide.

I want Vermont to continue protecting water quality, shoreline integrity, and user safety. Those goals are widely shared. However, the 2024 rule already represented a meaningful compromise that addressed many of the concerns raised over the past several years.

Rather than moving immediately to further statewide limitations, I respectfully recommend the Agency convene a multi-season stakeholder roundtable that includes anglers, paddlers, wakesports participants, lake associations, and enforcement personnel. Monitoring documented incidents across different lake types would provide Vermont with stronger, Vermont-specific evidence to guide any future adjustments.

Balanced stewardship requires patience, good data, and open communication. Maintaining the current rule while continuing collaborative evaluation would best serve Vermont's long-term interests.

Jeff Robinson

Dear Vermont ANR and DEC Staff,

I am writing as a longtime Vermont paddler who also spends time on motorboats with friends and family. Because I experience our lakes from the seat of a kayak as well as from behind the helm, I care deeply about thoughtful, balanced management of our shared waters.

After reviewing the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments, I respectfully oppose expanding the current restrictions and instead support maintaining the 2024 wake zone rule while additional real-world evaluation takes place.

From a paddler's perspective, predictability and clear expectations matter more than continually shifting rules. The 2024 framework already established meaningful distance and depth requirements. In my experience on the water since its adoption, most boaters appear to be adapting appropriately when conditions are clearly communicated.

What concerns me about the current proposal is the apparent reliance on precautionary concerns in situations where documented wakeboat activity was limited or absent. When regulation expands primarily in response to anticipated risk rather than demonstrated patterns, it can unintentionally create imbalance among user groups who have historically shared the water successfully.

The acreage calculations also deserve careful attention. Using the proposed geometry:

$3,000 \text{ ft run} \times 1,000 \text{ ft width} = 3,000,000 \text{ sq ft}$
 $3,000,000 \div 43,560 = \text{approximately } 68.9 \text{ acres}$

PLEASE NOTE And Significantly less acreage if the boat is going less than 11.5 mph and buffer less than 500ft from any object

The proposed 100-acre eligibility threshold significantly exceeds that modeled footprint, along with assumes that a traditional wakesports session speed and run time, along with safety buffer, none of which are factual, however directly correlate with the acreage proposed. . Before adopting a higher statewide minimum, I believe the State should clearly demonstrate why a less restrictive configuration would not adequately protect paddlers and other users.

Equally important is education. Major operational rules are most effective when they are fully embedded into boating safety courses, instructor materials, and public outreach. My understanding is that the 2024 changes are still working their way through portions of the education pipeline. Expanding the framework before that process is complete may reduce clarity rather than improve safety.

I strongly support Vermont continuing to protect quiet-water experiences for paddlers. At the same time, our public waters have long supported multiple forms of recreation when guided by clear, fair rules.

For that reason, I respectfully recommend the Agency:

- Maintain the 2024 wake zone rule
- Continue monitoring documented user conflicts
- Ensure full education integration
- Convene a standing multi-user committee

A collaborative, data-driven approach over the next several seasons would provide Vermont with stronger evidence and greater public confidence before considering further statewide changes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Respectfully,
Cathy Morlock

To the Rulemaking Team,

I am a Vermont resident who uses our lakes for family recreation throughout the summer months. Our household includes swimmers, paddleboarders, anglers, and yes — occasional wakesports participants when conditions allow. Because we represent the full range of lake users in one family, I am writing to respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 expansion and support keeping the 2024 rule in place.

One area that gives me pause is the connection between the petition record and the scale of the proposed statewide response. Several of the lakes cited appear to have reported little or no established wakeboat activity. Where concerns are largely precautionary, a measured monitoring approach may be more appropriate than immediate expansion of restrictions.

The current framework already reflects a meaningful compromise. It addressed shoreline distance, depth considerations, and operating zones in a way that many of us believed struck a workable middle ground. Major regulatory changes typically benefit from a multi-year evaluation period before additional layers are added.

I also encourage the Agency to prioritize education consistency. For families like mine, boating safety courses are often the primary source of operational knowledge. Ensuring that the existing 2024 rule is fully and clearly integrated into all instructional channels should be a prerequisite step before additional restrictions are considered.

The spatial modeling also raises legitimate technical questions. If the conceptual corridor equals roughly 65 acres (significantly less than the proposed 100-acre minimum) and represents a substantial increase beyond the calculated footprint. Small adjustments in speed assumptions further reduce the modeled area. When regulatory thresholds are highly sensitive to input assumptions, it suggests additional technical review would be beneficial.

Most Vermont families simply want safe, predictable lakes where different users can coexist respectfully. The 2024 rule moved the State meaningfully in that direction.

Rather than expanding statewide limitations now, I respectfully recommend:

- maintain the current 2024 rule
- monitor real incident data
- improve public education alignment
- convene ongoing stakeholder dialogue

That balanced path would strengthen both safety and fairness across Vermont's waters.

Thank you
Mark Amoia

Dear Lakes and Ponds / DEC Staff,

I write as a Vermont resident and seasonal lake user who believes strongly in shared public resources and in regulations that are both rational and workable in practice. I oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and urge the State to retain the 2024 wake zone rule as written while Vermont completes a proper evaluation period and improves implementation.

The proposed expansion relies on an “impact corridor” concept that, on paper, looks tidy: 3,000 feet long with a 500-foot buffer on each side, producing a 1,000-foot-wide corridor. But the record itself notes that the cited shoreline attenuation studies address shoreline processes in shallow water and that on-water safety concerns involve conditions in deeper water where hydrodynamic behavior differs. Treating those shoreline studies as the primary basis for an “all objects” open-water safety rule can be challenged as not rationally connected to the factual basis asserted.

I am also concerned that the “all objects” buffer may create perverse safety outcomes on certain lakes by shrinking the usable area and encouraging concentration. When public waters are constrained by a large moving separation bubble, boats and paddlecraft may be pushed into narrower remaining routes, increasing crossing points and conflict potential. Safety is about predictable behavior and adequate maneuvering space, not merely about increasing nominal separation distances in every direction.

The run length assumption illustrates why the proposal’s math does not hold up as a stable basis for statewide decisions. A three-minute ride at 10 mph equals 2,640 feet.

At 8 mph, it equals 2,112 feet.

Younger boarders and families teaching new riders often operate at lower speeds such as 7–8 mph, which shortens the run substantially. These aren’t edge cases; they are part of everyday on-water reality.

When the input changes, the acreage changes, and that directly affects how many boats can operate and how many “passes” can occur without crowding. Under the corridor method, the 10-mph scenario produces 60.6 acres and the 8-mph scenario produces 48.5 acres — both far below 100 acres.

The record explains that even modest adjustments to run length and buffer width yield large shifts in eligibility outcomes.

That sensitivity is precisely why a hard statewide 100-acre minimum appears arbitrary rather than “least restrictive practicable.”

The field comparison offered in the record does not cure this. It was uncontrolled, not replicated, subject to drift, and confounded by other traffic, and it tested only two distances without intermediate evaluation.

That is not sufficient to establish a statewide minimum buffer “around any object.”

Finally, the petition record indicates 55% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity.

In that context, expanding statewide restrictions beyond the 2024 compromise before full evaluation and education integration seems premature.

I respectfully request Vermont keep the 2024 rule in place, improve statewide education and implementation, and convene an ongoing, roundtable to monitor real conflicts, AIS concerns, and

safety outcomes over the next several seasons.

Respectfully submitted,
Drake Battista and Francesca Battista

I frequently go to the Waterbury reservoir and I am disturbed by the wake boats there. After watching videos of how disruptive they are to the underwater habitat I had to respond. Don't get me wrong, I like to buzz around but it is in a 14' aluminum v hull boat with a 25hp motor and I get up on plane. I like to enjoy the fishing there too but nearly get thrown overboard by the wake boats wake even if they are far away. I think they should only be allowed in lake Champlain and other larger bodies of water. They truly ruin the peace and harm the natural resource we all share. I understand freedom but a few people should not be allowed to negatively effect the natural resource for everyone else trying to enjoy it. Given another place to use the wake boats should be a fair compromise. Just not in smaller bodies of water. The state parks make money and if we allow them to be destroyed then that also means the money goes away and the tourism goes away.

I live on Joe's Pond and have for over 70 years. Joe's Pond is too small for wake sport activity. Other normal use activity has to stop when the wake sports is happening. Specifically for those camps just outside the 500 foot distance allowed today. Swimming, kayaking, sailing, and fishing cease when those big wake boats are happening. Is this fair? I am begging the DEC to adopt the FOVLAP recommendations for the small lakes of Vermont with regard to wake sports. Joe's Pond recently was infested with European Water Milfoil. It takes no stretch of the imagination to believe that at least one of the local wake sport boat was trailered to Lake Champlain to enjoy the sport and brought back to Joe's Pond the noxious weed. No lake greeter program can detect this weed within the wake boat's ballast tanks. No thanks go to the DEC for not enforcing home lake rule. Please protect Vermont's small lakes from this sporting activity. Thank you.

I was surprised and dismayed to learn that the period for public comments had been reopened after its official end. Given how long the time for commenting had been open (weeks, if not months), it's difficult to understand how anyone or any group could wait so long to make a request for more time. It smells fishy.

There is something else that smells fishy. A couple of weeks prior to the end of the comment period, I was told that roughly 700 comments had been submitted, which is about the number submitted two years ago. Two weeks later, it's my understanding that the number has grown to 1,200+ comments. This seems completely out of line with the experience before. Where were all these commenters when the public meetings were held? Where were they 2 years ago? Does it really seem plausible that more than 500 Vermonters suddenly became enthused about the wake boat issue and decided to submit a comment? I think it is far more likely that these late arriving comments were submitted from individuals outside of the state at the behest of the deep-pocketed wake boat industry and/or marina owners, in an effort to overwhelm the number of comments from the actual users of Vermont lakes and ponds. You must stand firm against the effort to hijack this issue. In the future, fairness dictates that addresses from all commenters should be provided, so that you can see where the support is coming from. For now, though, I hope your assessment of the comments will not be simply a headcount of Yes and No but will instead be a serious and thoughtful consideration of the merits of the arguments.

My name is Francine Chittenden, a 50-year-old Waterbury resident, and a frequent user of the Waterbury Reservoir.

The wakesport issue is not just being debated in Vermont, it is a nation-wide concern. Many states have spent considerable time and resources researching the impact of wakesports on their lakes. These scientific studies have been widely shared. Lakes, ponds, rivers, and reservoirs throughout the United States do not know what town, county, state, or country they are located in. This data represents all bodies of water and how wakesurfing on smaller inland lakes negatively impacts them.

For those who claim that they leave their boats on their home-lake and do not trailer them to other lakes in Vermont, this is simply not true. The Waterbury Reservoir does not have property owners surrounding its shores. It is located in the Mount Mansfield State Forest. All boats must be trailered and launched daily whenever they are used here. There are no moorings, marinas, or docks that allow boats to be left overnight on the Waterbury Reservoir. I have personally observed them being launched here and have little knowledge of where they were last used other than what unverifiable data our Greeters can collect.

I am in support of the proposed amendment to the UPW's rule. It will protect an additional 13 small inland Vermont's lakes and help to ensure that the majority of users can continue to use these lakes safely.

Dear ANR ,

I am writing as a Vermont small-business employee whose work depends in part on the health of our lake recreation economy. I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports expansion and urge the State to keep the 2024 wake zone rule in place while additional Vermont-specific data is gathered.

Public water policy works best when it is both environmentally responsible and economically realistic. The current proposal raises concerns on both fronts.

First, the technical modeling behind the acreage threshold appears highly sensitive to assumptions. I personally have been on wakeboats and regular boats with water skiers. The variables of riders range highly, and it is noted that the 3,000 is calculated based on the agency best guess at a general speed and run time. Both of these are highly variable, including myself witnessing this while a passenger on the boats. A 3,000-foot run combined with a 1,000-foot width produces approximately 68.9 acres. Using a lower bound operating speed produces even smaller footprints. When the proposed eligibility threshold jumps to 100 acres, it materially changes which lakes remain available for shared use, however does not follow the thought process of best public use for multi users, safety, or least restrictive.

Second, implementation sequencing matters. The State adopted significant wakesports changes in 2024. Before expanding further, it would be prudent to confirm that the current rule has been fully communicated through:

- boating safety instruction
- enforcement guidance
- public outreach
- and inter-agency coordination

Layering additional restrictions before that process is complete risks creating uneven understanding among the boating public.

Third, the petition context suggests that documented conflicts may be more limited and localized than a statewide expansion implies. That does not mean concerns should be ignored — only that they may be better addressed through targeted monitoring and collaborative management rather than immediate broad tightening.

I strongly support protecting Vermont's water quality, shoreline integrity, and user safety. Those goals are widely shared across the boating and paddling communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend maintaining the 2024 rule while convening a structured, multi-year roundtable process involving all major lake user groups. Real Vermont data collected over time will provide a much stronger foundation for any future adjustments that may be warranted.

Thank You Loni and John Wasilewski

Dear regulators,

I support the proposed changes which would protect more lakes from wakeboats, but request that you go further in protecting the Public Trust Doctrine to keep even more lakes for all users.

At 75, I enjoy swimming and kayaking (now in a 12' lightweight kayak) on numerous lakes as I have since I was a child. And now I enjoy kayaking and swimming with my family including elementary-school-age grandchildren in their own kayaks. It is obviously safer for us to do so where wakeboats are prohibited or restricted. This proposed rule would create a larger safety zone for those of us enjoying the lakes, and protect us from the increasingly bigger boats of the future.

It would also protect more lakes from the spread of invasive species and the stirring up of phosphorus in sediment by wakeboats. Vermont has made efforts to clean up the latter, and it is counterproductive to increase this environmental problem.

Please protect Vermont lakes for future generations.

Shadow Lake is a small, beautiful gem in the Northeast Kingdom, whose ecological health and safety have already been compromised by the damage to our dam. I strongly support the need to disallow wake boards. They will present a danger to the smaller water craft that use our lake as well as creating a serious danger to swimmers of all ages in our community.

Once again, I am asking you to prioritize the safety of the majority of users of Joe's Pond in the summer by banning wake boats from a body of water this small. I realize I am asking the one or two wake boat owners here to sacrifice a certain amount of enjoyment for themselves, but it's in the interest of the safety as well as enjoyment of the majority of users of this pond in the summer. Please.

The extension of the public comment period, the end date of which was known for months, at the request of supporters of wake sports was a blatant breaking of usual procedure. The tally of responses should be split into initial period and extension period. If there are dramatically more comments against the new rules in the extension period that would suggest a "ballot stuffing" by the wakesport industry.

Newer wakeboats are advertised as creating bigger and bigger wakes- that could make the proposed 500 foot buffer inadequate and the current 200 foot buffer dangerous for anyone in the water when a wake boat is operating.

Dear Department Representatives,

I submit this comment as a lifelong Vermont lake user and waterfront owner who values both environmental stewardship and fair public access. After reviewing the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments, I respectfully oppose the expansion and support keeping the 2024 wake zone rule in place while additional evaluation occurs.

From a practical standpoint, the current rule is still relatively new. Major operational frameworks typically benefit from multiple seasons of observation before further adjustments are made. That evaluation period allows agencies to distinguish between isolated concerns and sustained patterns requiring broader response.

The petition summaries suggest that many of the cited lakes had limited or no documented wakeboat presence; however, it was decided to move forward with statewide expansion due to safety concerns. Where concerns are primarily anticipatory (as 7 of the 11 lakes noted no wake boats have been on the waters or only 1 boat), the least restrictive management approach would typically emphasize monitoring, education, and targeted response before statewide expansion.

I also wanted to clarify the 3,000 foot and 1,000 foot wide wakeboat run. I personally have a wakeboat, and it seems these numbers are based on general assumptions and not real-life testing. Our boat can have different riders from young to old, and lighter and heavier riders. Depending on the rider, our boat can operate anywhere from 7 mph (for the little ones) to about 10 or 11 mph for adults. It is noted in your presentations that you are assuming the average run is 3 minutes. If you do the math on the average on my boat (7–10 mph), my average speed is 8.5 mph, and after a 3-minute run, that would put me at a run of 2,244 feet on my boat. This is significantly different and less than your proposed 3,000 feet.

Lastly, it seems that the acreage presented is based on a 500-foot buffer from shore, with a run of 3,000 by 1,000 feet equating to your acres minimum requirement. The acreage math also warrants careful consideration. Using the proposed geometry:

$3,000 \text{ ft} \times 1,000 \text{ ft} = 3,000,000 \text{ sq ft}$
= approximately 68.9 acres

This is materially below the proposed 100-acre threshold. Because eligibility decisions hinge directly on this number, it is important that the selected standard clearly reflect the minimum necessary footprint to achieve safety goals.

I am also mindful that effective regulation depends heavily on public understanding. Ensuring that the existing 2024 rule is fully embedded in boating education, instructor training, and enforcement guidance should be a priority step before further changes are layered on top.

Vermont has a long tradition of shared water use. Anglers, paddlers, sailors, and powerboaters have successfully coexisted for decades under clear and predictable rules. Rather than expanding restrictions at this time, I respectfully encourage the Agency to maintain the current 2024 framework and relook at the factual run times and buffers needed inside the wake zone, as the 3,000 × 1,000 ft standard appears overreached and not grounded in real-world averages.

Thank you,
Tom Bladen

I am writing as a frequent multi-lake user and multiboat owner, who values Vermont's reputation for balanced, common-sense outdoor management. After reviewing the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes, I respectfully oppose the expansion and support maintaining the 2024 rule while additional collaborative evaluation occurs.

The existing rule already represented a significant policy step. Before moving further, it is reasonable to ensure the current framework has been fully implemented, consistently taught, and carefully evaluated using Vermont-specific data. I have a few concerns based on methodology of the wakeboat run, the education gap, and lastly the petition details.

The spatial modeling further suggests the need for caution. The commonly referenced corridor of 3,000 by 1,000 feet equates is based solely on non tested information, averages of the number the agency feels is appropriate, when I personally have experience and note that our boat can travel anywhere from 8 mph to 11 mph, depending on the rider that day. This does not equate to 3,000 feet run and would be significantly less than 3,000 feet. This alone with recalculate and lower the acreage threshold proposed. The proposed 100-acre minimum therefore introduces a substantial margin above the modeled space requirement. Because small changes in speed assumptions produce significantly different acreage outcomes, additional technical review would strengthen the foundation of any future rulemaking.

One concern is the apparent reliance on precautionary petition concerns in situations where documented wakeboat activity was limited or nonexistent. Responsible policymaking typically distinguishes between observed conflict and hypothetical risk when determining whether statewide restrictions are warranted, and these petitions directly contradict that, as you cannot consider safety and conflict concerns for those petitions that stated no wake activity was present on the lake. Lastly, with this statewide opening of the rule, the new parameters directly pull additional lakes onto the ineligible list, when they had no petitioned issues or requested changes. This again directly goes against anything that should be considered for a statewide change.

And as I have mentioned in past hearings, equally important is the education component. With all of these numbers and changes, major operational requirements should be fully integrated into the State's boating safety curriculum, handbooks, course testing, and outreach systems. Ensuring the 2024 rule is consistently taught and understood across all platforms should precede any additional regulatory expansion.

I believe Vermont can continue protecting water quality, shoreline resources, and user safety while preserving fair shared access. The boating and paddling communities are not inherently in conflict — most of us participate in multiple lake activities over the course of a season.

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend:

- Maintain the 2024 wake zone rule
- Monitor real-world data over several seasons before considering the need for expansion
- Strengthen education consistency

This measured approach would produce more durable policy and stronger public confidence in this process and rule.

Thank you
Tom Burdick

To the State of Vermont Rulemaking Record,

I submit this comment to oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and to request that the 2024 wake zone rule remain in effect as written. I am a Vermont resident who believes public policy should be understandable, consistent, and defensible — especially when it limits long-standing recreational access to public waters.

What troubles me most about this proposal is that the eligibility threshold is being driven by a corridor model that is extremely sensitive to chosen assumptions, while the record does not demonstrate that those assumptions represent minimum necessary conditions for safety in open water. The 1,000-foot corridor width is not a measured scientific constant; it is the product of applying 500 feet on each side. Yet the record notes that the shoreline attenuation literature being referenced concerns shallow-water dynamics, and that deep-water, on-water handling conditions are different.

If those are different physical contexts, then it is not logically sufficient to say “shoreline 500 therefore all objects 500.”

I also question whether the 500-foot “all objects” construct can inadvertently reduce safety. On smaller or irregular lakes, it shrinks the usable operating area and encourages concentration of multiple users into the remaining space. A rule can be well-intended yet still create a traffic-flow problem by removing maneuvering room, especially if the rule’s geometry forces everyone to occupy narrower lanes.

The run-length assumption is likewise inconsistent with the stated basis. A “3-minute ride” does not equal 3,000 feet at 10–12 mph. The record provides the calculation that at 10 mph for 3 minutes the run is 2,640 feet.

At 8 mph it becomes 2,112 feet.

I personally have a wakeboat, and lighter women and younger boarders, lighter riders, or families teaching kids frequently operate at slower speeds like 7–8 mph, which reduces the distance even further. Those differences are not rare outliers; they reflect common on-water practice.

Once run length changes, acreage changes. Under the same corridor method, 2,640 feet at 1,000 feet wide is 60.6 acres.

At 2,112 feet it is 48.5 acres.

The record explicitly explains that modest adjustments to speed and buffer width produce dramatically different acreage outcomes and therefore different statewide eligibility decisions.

When eligibility is determined by a number that swings that much with basic inputs, the least restrictive practicable approach demands careful scenario analysis — not a single hard threshold set above what the model itself yields.

The field comparison offered in support of the 500-foot buffer is not a robust basis for statewide policy. The record identifies multiple uncontrolled variables, lack of replication, and limited distance testing.

Lastly, the petition record indicates that 55% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity on that lake, however these same petitions stated fear and safety concerns. You can not have one without the other?

That context suggests Vermont should focus on monitoring and targeted management rather than broad statewide expansion before the existing 2024 framework has even been fully evaluated.

I request the Agency keep the 2024 rule in place and establish a standing discussion groups to monitor the rule as we move forward — including paddlers, anglers, swimmers, lake associations, wakesports

participants, enforcement, and Agency staff — to track real conflicts, AIS concerns, and safety outcomes over multiple seasons.

Jon Wible

From listening to wakesport supporters at DEC meetings, I have yet to hear an admission of the hazards wakesports bring to a lake. By PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE alone, wake boats, consequently wakesports, should be prohibited on Vermont lakes.

Short of that, DEC must adopt & enforce the strictest measures to protect human life and wildlife, and the water which makes it possible.

David Bradshaw

Wake boarding on our lakes, such as Bomoseen and Willoughby will bring noise, environmental disturbances, and be disruptive to fishing.

Dear DEC Representatives,

I am writing to oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports restrictions and to urge the State to keep the 2024 wake zone rule in place while Vermont completes a proper evaluation period. I use public waters for paddling, swimming, and boating, and I want rules that are credible, teachable, and tied to real conditions rather than to a single corridor diagram that becomes the controlling factor for statewide eligibility.

The proposal's "impact zone" design relies on three linked assumptions: a 3-minute ride, a 10–12 mph speed range, and a 500-foot buffer applied so broadly it becomes a 1,000-foot-wide operational corridor. The record itself notes that the cited shoreline attenuation studies concern shallow-water processes and that on-water safety involves conditions in deeper water where hydrodynamic behavior differs.

That distinction is crucial. A shoreline setback can be justified as shoreline protection. Transforming it into "500 feet from any object" is a separate policy choice that needs its own justification — particularly because it can reduce maneuvering room and create congested lanes.

Even if one accepts the "3 minutes" framing, the numbers do not support the 3,000-foot run as a mathematical consequence. At 10 mph for 180 seconds, the run length is 2,640 feet. (11 which would be an average of your numbers is 2,940)

The record also recognizes that wakesports speeds can be lower, including around 8 mph, yielding 2,112 feet. (which for the record my boat typically runs 7-10mph for our riders portfolios), which would be even less than the 2112 feet minimum needed. .

. When those run lengths are used in the same corridor equation, the resulting acreage is far below 100 acres (60.6 acres at 10 mph; 48.5 acres at 8 mph)., and this is not even considering that the 500ft buffer (which is not proven as needed) inside the zone, will shrink these areas even more.

This is not an abstract math debate. The proposal says wakesports zones under 100 acres can generally accommodate only one run, and that 100 acres provides space for multiple pathways. But if the model's own inputs are variable — and they are — the "multiple pathways" claim shifts with the assumptions. If a 3-minute run at 7–8 mph is common for some riders, the modeled corridor shrinks, and the minimum acreage needed to accommodate multiple passes changes dramatically. The record explicitly explains that small changes in run length, operating speed, and buffer width yield large changes in acreage outcomes.

In that context, setting a hard statewide number at 100 acres looks less like a safety-derived threshold and more like a policy outcome selected beyond what the model produces.

The evidentiary basis for the open-water buffer is also weak. The field comparison described in the record is uncontrolled and unreplicated, involved drift, was measured from a moving platform, included other boat traffic, and compared only two distances without intermediate testing.

That does not establish a statewide minimum necessary buffer, and it does not show that an "all objects" buffer is warranted.

Finally, the petition context matters. The petition record indicates that 7 of petition lakes said they have no wakeboat activity, or 1 boat in 2023.

When the underlying conditions are mixed and often minimal, the appropriate response is not automatic statewide expansion; it is careful monitoring, education, and targeted management when conflicts are actually demonstrated.

My request: keep the 2024 rule in place, convene a standing review with lake users, boat owners, marinas, and Agency staff, and monitor real incidents and AIS concerns over multiple seasons before tightening restrictions further.

Bob Pearo
Austin's Wharf Canvas

Dear ANR and DEC Rulemaking Staff,

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and urge the Agency to retain the 2024 wake zone rule while the State conducts a more rigorous quantitative review of the proposed thresholds.

My primary concern is mathematical integrity. Regulatory thresholds that determine lake eligibility must be grounded in demonstrable calculations, not in selective averaging followed by upward rounding that materially changes outcomes.

The proposal relies on a conceptual corridor of 3,000 feet by 1,000 feet. Yet using the Agency's own three-minute ride premise, the arithmetic does not support the 3,000-foot figure as a necessary baseline. At 10 mph for three minutes, the run length is approximately 2,640 feet.

At 8 mph, which is common for certain riders and conditions (personally I ride at 8 1/2 mph), the run length is approximately 2,112 feet.

When those empirically reasonable values are inserted into the same 1,000-foot corridor model, the resulting acreage is approximately 60.6 acres at 10 mph and 48.5 acres at 8 mph.

This is not a minor discrepancy. The proposed 100-acre threshold exceeds the modeled footprint by a wide margin, (as 3,000,000 square feet converted to acres is roughly 68 acres, and the record itself acknowledges that modest changes in inputs produce dramatically different acreage outcomes and eligibility results.

From a mathematical standpoint, one cannot average a variable range, select a midpoint, and then round upward to create a regulatory minimum that eliminates additional waterbodies. When eligibility hinges directly on acreage, upward rounding is not neutral — it is outcome determinative.

This concern is amplified by the petition context. The summary indicates that approximately 7 of petition lakes stated they do not have wakeboats on their waters.

Expanding a statewide exclusion framework using a mathematically inflated threshold risks disproportionately affecting lakes that did not petition for additional restriction in the first place.

I also question whether the universal 500-foot "all objects" buffer has been adequately demonstrated for open-water safety. The technical discussion distinguishes shoreline attenuation processes from deep-water user interactions and notes the potential rational-connection concern when shoreline literature is used as the primary basis for all-object separation.

Before adopting a statewide standard with such significant eligibility consequences, the Agency should ensure the numeric thresholds reflect the minimum necessary conditions supported by controlled analysis.

I respectfully recommend maintaining the 2024 rule and convening a multi-season stakeholder and technical review before further expansion.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments,
Lori Kelton

Dear ANR,

After further review of your documents, I write to oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments on the grounds that the quantitative basis for the 100-acre threshold appears mathematically overextended relative to the modeled inputs described in the rulemaking record.

Administrative decision-making benefits from clear numerical integrity. Where a rule's practical effect is to render additional lakes ineligible, the underlying calculations should reflect measured conditions rather than conservative rounding choices that compound through the model.

The Agency's own time-and-speed framing yields materially shorter run lengths than the proposed 3,000 feet. At 10 mph for three minutes, the run is 2,640 feet; at 8 mph, 2,112 feet.

These values are not speculative — they fall squarely within normal operating ranges.

When applied to the same corridor width, the resulting acreage falls well below 100 acres. The record further explains that the acreage outcome is highly sensitive to assumptions regarding speed, run length, and buffer width.

In that context, adopting a fixed 100-acre minimum without clearly demonstrating why lower mathematically supported values are insufficient raises a legitimate least-restrictive-means concern and bias.

Equally important, the petition summary indicates that a majority of petition lakes did not have established wakeboat activity.

Expanding eligibility exclusions statewide based on a threshold that exceeds the modeled footprint risks imposing restrictions on waterbodies that were not the source of the underlying concern.

I also note the record's distinction between shoreline erosion science and open-water safety dynamics. The materials acknowledge that relying on shoreline attenuation literature as the primary factual basis for an all-object buffer may not be directly connected to the asserted safety objective.

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend that the Agency retain the 2024 wake zone rule, OR rewrite the current rule to show that the minimum threshold would be minimum of 2,112 foot run, 500foot wide buffer(as currently written in 2024), 500 foot shoreline only buffer, or conduct further controlled analysis before adopting the proposed expansion.

Respectfully,
Joe Stuhmeuller

I am a homeowner on the Lake Willoughby shoreline and write to oppose permitting wakeboats on Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes. Vermont's lakes are valued for their clear waters, ecological integrity, and safe, quiet recreational use. Allowing wakeboats would undermine these qualities and create significant environmental and safety risks.

Wakeboats pose a heightened risk of spreading aquatic invasive species due to the large volumes of water retained in ballast and bilge systems and transported between lakes. Vermont has invested substantial resources in preventing invasive species, and permitting wakeboats would jeopardize decades of protection efforts.

Wakeboats also raise serious safety concerns. Their large wakes endanger swimmers and non-motorized watercraft, particularly on narrow lakes where wave impacts are amplified. Limited marine enforcement further undermines the effectiveness of proposed wakesports zones.

In addition, wakeboat wakes accelerate shoreline erosion, damaging fragile ecosystems, degrading water quality, and threatening the stability of shoreline properties. Wakeboats also disrupt loon nesting habitat, increasing the risk of nest flooding and long-term population decline.

For these reasons, permitting wakeboats would have significant negative consequences for Vermont lakes. We urge continued restrictions to protect Lake Willoughby and preserve Vermont's lakes for future generations.

I do not support wakeboats on Sunset Lake

Dear Vermont DEC and ANR,

I oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports expansion and respectfully request that the State maintain the 2024 wake zone rule.

Simply put, the math driving the proposed 100-acre threshold does not appear to hold up under straightforward review.

If the Agency's premise is a three-minute ride, then the distance traveled must reflect actual speed. At 10 mph, the run is 2,640 feet. At 8 mph, it is 2,112 feet. Even at 11 mph it is 2,940 feet. A 12 mph run is unlikely, and if you averaged the ranges of 7 mph to 12mph, the average would be 9.5 mph = 2,508 feet, a more likely scenario in the real world surf boat riding.

When those realistic values are used in the same 1,000-foot corridor, the acreage requirement drops well below 100 acres (and even at 12mph, the threshold is still well below 100 acres).

- $3,000 \text{ ft} \times 1,000 \text{ ft} = 3,000,000 \text{ sq ft} \approx 68.87 \text{ acres}$
- $3,168 \text{ ft} \times 1,000 \text{ ft} = 3,168,000 \text{ sq ft} \approx 72.73 \text{ acres}$

The rulemaking record itself confirms that small changes in assumptions materially change eligibility outcomes.

It is methodologically unsound to establish a regulatory threshold by generalizing from a numerical range, choosing a midpoint, and then rounding upward—most notably when the underlying petition data reflects limited or nonexistent wakeboat presence on the majority of lakes.

Also remaining concerns are that the blanket 500-foot buffer from any object has not been demonstrated as necessary for open-water safety and may, in some lake configurations, compress traffic rather than improve separation.

The prudent course is clear: maintain the 2024 rule, complete full implementation and education, and monitor real-world Vermont conditions through this process before expanding restrictions further.

Thank you,
Michael Robertello

Dear ANR Leadership,

I oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments based on concerns regarding quantitative justification and proportional regulatory impact.

The proposed 100-acre minimum appears to be derived from a geometric corridor that is highly sensitive to input assumptions. Using the Agency's own three-minute ride framework, a vessel traveling 10 mph covers approximately 2,640 feet, while at 8 mph the distance is approximately 2,112 feet. (I personally have a wakeboat and my children ride at 7 mph, where I ride at around 9-10), again all less than the 3,000 minimum threshold and below the mathematics of the 3,000 threshold.

When those values are applied to the same 1,000-foot wide corridor, the resulting acreage falls materially below 100 acres. The rulemaking materials explicitly acknowledge that modest changes in speed and buffer assumptions produce large shifts in eligibility outcomes.

Where a regulatory threshold is this sensitive, upward rounding or conservative parameter selection can functionally determine which lakes remain eligible. That dynamic warrants careful scrutiny under a least-restrictive-practicable framework.

This concern is reinforced by the petition context indicating that approximately 55% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity.

A statewide expansion based on a mathematically elevated threshold risks affecting waterbodies beyond the scope of demonstrated conflict.

I further note the record's discussion distinguishing shoreline attenuation research from open-water safety conditions and acknowledging potential rational-connection concerns when applying shoreline distances to all-object separation and again this will directly relate and reduce the acreage needed well below the 100 acres. .

For these reasons, I ask to maintain the 2024 rule (specifically the 50 acres minimum)

Thank you
Angela Amoia

I am writing to you today as a property owner on Lake Willoughby. Not only am I in support of the changes proposed, I would hope that they would be changed again, to be strengthened. Willoughby needs to be respected for the National Natural Landmark that the Federal Gov't recognized it as. What also needs to be considered is the lack of proper enforcement, fueling stations, and public spaces on the lake where wake boating won't completely wipe out other water sports like swimming, kayaking, paddle boating, and fishing. I have commented for the past several years and what is never fully addressed is the cost to those of us left behind to clean up the mess that will be left as more lakes shut down wakeboarding, and few remain open. There is no plan in place for enforcement, fueling, remediation - the costs shouldn't come at the expense of those who live on the Willoughby or surrounding areas. Thank you for your time.

Dear ANR Lakes and Ponds Program,

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports expansion and urge the Agency to retain the 2024 rule until the technical and educational record is more fully developed.

After carefully reviewing the materials, I am concerned that the proposed 100-acre threshold is the product of stacked assumptions rather than a demonstrated minimum necessary condition grounded in replicated Vermont-specific analysis.

First, the petition data itself does not reflect uniform statewide conflict. The Agency's summary indicates that roughly 7 of petition lakes established NO wakeboat activity.

That fact alone suggests caution before expanding a statewide exclusion framework.

Second, the run-length math does not support the use of 3,000 feet as the natural outcome of a three-minute ride. At 10 mph, the distance traveled in three minutes is approximately 2,640 feet.

At 8 mph, it is 2,112 feet.

These are not fringe scenarios; they reflect ordinary operating ranges

When those values are used in the same 1,000-foot corridor model, the acreage drops well below the proposed 100-acre threshold. The record itself confirms the acreage outcome is highly sensitive to input assumptions.

Third, the width assumption rests heavily on a limited field comparison that the record acknowledges was not controlled, not replicated, and based on a single observer's experience under variable conditions.

From a technical perspective, that type of observation is insufficient to establish a statewide minimum buffer, particularly one framed as "any object" rather than shoreline-specific.

Fourth, the State's own boating handbook and instructional ecosystem have not yet fully absorbed the 2024 rule in a clear, standardized way.

Expanding the framework before completing education alignment risks undermining compliance.

For all of these reasons, the prudent course is to maintain the 2024 rule and gather multi-season Vermont data before tightening eligibility further.

David Hassebroek

Dear Vermont Water Resources Decision-Makers,

I comment to oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments

The proposed eligibility framework depends heavily on a modeled corridor that appears mathematically and empirically fragile when examined closely.

Using the Agency's own three-minute premise, the run length at 10 mph is 2,640 feet, not 3,000.

At 8 mph, the run is 2,112 feet. (our boat has lighter riders, operate in the 7–8 mph range, which further shortens the distance).

Once those real-world speeds are inserted into the same 1,000-foot corridor model, the acreage drops to roughly 60 acres, 48 acres, and lower, depending on speed. The record explicitly notes that modest changes in assumptions produce large shifts in eligibility outcomes.

This means the proposed 100-acre threshold is not the direct mathematical consequence of the Agency's own time assumption; it is the result of layered conservative inputs and upward rounding.

Compounding this concern, the field comparison used to support the 500-foot buffer was not replicated and relied on a single subjective observation under uncontrolled conditions.

At the same time, the boating handbook and education pipeline have not yet fully integrated the 2024 rule in a standardized way.

Expanding the regulatory framework while education remains incomplete is premature.

Finally, the petition record shows that a majority of petition lakes did not have established wakeboat activity.

That mixed factual backdrop reinforces the need for measured, data-driven evaluation rather than immediate statewide tightening.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Agency to retain the 2024 wake zone rule and pursue a collaborative, evidence-building approach over the next several seasons.

Regards,
Hunter

To the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources,

I respectfully submit this technical comment opposing the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and recommending that the State retain the 2024 wake zone rule pending further empirical validation, education integration, and multi-season monitoring.

After reviewing the proposal and discussing its practical implications with other Vermont boaters and paddlers, I am concerned that the current numeric framework is driven by stacked assumptions that compound into a materially restrictive outcome not clearly supported by replicated evidence.

1. Petition Evidence Reflects Mixed Conditions

The Agency's own summary indicates that approximately 7% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity on their lakes.

This is a critical contextual factor. When the majority of petition lakes do not document ongoing wakeboat presence, expanding statewide eligibility restrictions using an elevated acreage threshold risks extending beyond the demonstrated factual need.

2. Three-Minute Ride Premise Does Not Yield 3,000 Feet

Using standard kinematic conversion:

Distance = Speed × Time

Where:

- Time = 180 seconds
- 1 mph = 1.4667 ft/sec

The resulting run lengths are:

- 10 mph → 2,640 feet
- 8 mph → 2,112 feet
- 7 mph → 1,848 feet

These values fall well below the proposed 3,000-foot run length. Accordingly, the 3,000-foot figure is not the mathematical output of the stated three-minute assumption but rather an additional policy margin layered onto the model.

3. Acreage Requirement Expands Through Assumption Stacking

Applying the same 1,000-foot corridor width:

- 2,640 ft → 60.6 acres
- 2,112 ft → 48.5 acres
- 1,848 ft → ≈42.4 acres

The proposed 100-acre minimum therefore substantially exceeds the acreage generated by the Agency's own time-based modeling inputs.

The rulemaking record expressly notes that acreage outcomes are highly sensitive to run length, speed, and buffer assumptions.

When eligibility determinations hinge on a threshold this sensitive, conservative parameter stacking combined with upward rounding materially affects which lakes remain eligible.

4. Empirical Basis for 500-Foot "Any Object" Buffer Is Limited

The supporting field comparison described in the record is acknowledged to be:

- non-replicated
- conducted under uncontrolled conditions
- based on a single observer
- measured from a moving platform
- limited to two discrete distances

The record itself recognizes that these limitations prevent the observation from establishing the minimum effective safety distance statewide.

Given the significant regulatory consequences of the resulting 1,000-foot corridor width, additional controlled and replicated analysis would materially strengthen the evidentiary foundation.

5. Education Pipeline Remains Incomplete

The Vermont boating handbook update in 2025 did not fully integrate the wakesports rule into the structured instructional format used for other operational requirements.

Based on discussions with other lake users, awareness of the 2024 rule remains uneven. Expanding the regulatory framework before completing education alignment is premature.

Conclusion

In light of:

- the mixed petition record,
- the mathematical sensitivity of the acreage model,
- the non-replicated nature of the field comparison, and
- the incomplete education rollout,

I respectfully recommend that the Agency maintain the 2024 wake zone rule while conducting further Vermont-specific analysis and stakeholder monitoring.

Dear ANR and DEC Rulemaking Staff,

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports expansion and urge the Agency to retain the 2024 wake zone rule while Vermont completes full implementation and gathers additional Vermont-specific operating data.

After reviewing the technical basis for the proposed acreage threshold, I am concerned that the model rests on stacked assumptions rather than replicated, open-water performance data. In particular, the conversion of a shoreline-derived setback into a uniform 500-foot “any object” buffer appears to lack controlled validation under typical deep-water operating conditions. Shoreline attenuation and mid-lake vessel interaction are not hydrodynamically identical environments, and the record itself distinguishes between them.

The practical consequence of this assumption is the creation of a 1,000-foot wide operational corridor, which then drives the 100-acre eligibility threshold. However, the field comparison cited to support this width was not replicated, was conducted under variable conditions, and relied on a single observer. That type of observational snapshot cannot reliably establish a statewide minimum separation distance, particularly one that materially affects lake eligibility.

The run-length premise raises additional concerns. Using the Agency’s own three-minute ride framing:

10 mph × 180 seconds = 2,640 feet

8 mph × 180 seconds = 2,112 feet

7 mph × 180 seconds = 1,848 feet

None of these realistic operating speeds produce a 3,000-foot run in three minutes. When inserted into the same 1,000-foot corridor model, the resulting acreage ranges roughly from 42 to 61 acres, depending on speed. The rulemaking materials acknowledge that acreage outcomes are highly sensitive to these inputs, and that is at the 1000 foot buffer, which is also way overstated.

In conversations with fellow boaters this past season, many responsible operators are still working to fully understand the 2024 rule, and the Vermont boating handbook has not yet fully integrated the wakesports provisions into the same structured format as other operational rules. Expanding restrictions while the education pipeline remains incomplete risks uneven compliance.

Finally, the petition summary indicates that approximately 55% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity, suggesting the factual landscape is mixed rather than uniform statewide.

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend maintaining the 2024 rule, or write the 2025 rule as a minimum 2,200ft run, keep the 50 acre minimum as in 2024 rule, and change the buffer to 550 (which is just above the current buffer), along with completing full education integration, and conducting replicated Vermont-specific open-water analysis before adopting additional statewide restrictions.

Mark

This is my second comment in support of the adoption, forthwith, of the proposed UPW rule on wakesports. It is important that the proposed rule be in place as soon as possible and in time for the 2026 boating season.

It has been said that the public comment process in rulemaking is not a "popularity contest." If it were, there is no doubt that the overwhelming public opinion is that wakesports must be regulated as proposed - or in a more restrictive manner. Having 18 inland lakes in Vermont to enjoy wakesports in a responsible manner is eminently reasonable. It is an activity of limited access because of its great expense. In addition to the 18 inland lakes, wakesport enthusiasts have the great expanse of Lakes Champlain and Memphremagog to enjoy their sport.

The recent introduction of wakesports to Vermont's inland lakes has disrupted the vast majority of lake users who are anglers, paddlers, swimmers, and sailors. These normal users do not complain much; they do not call the police or report actual violations. If the incident of police calls were to be the standard of regulation, perhaps the rule requiring a life preserver on a paddleboard might be eliminated! Not wearing a life jacket while paddling is a rule that is often violated; at the same time this violation does not disturb other users in their enjoyment of public waters. Wake surfing close to shore or close to other users not only violates current rules, it drives normal users off the public waters and creates safety issues.

The wakeboard heads call for "more education." Education is surely needed - wake surfing damages shorelines and lake beds. It is a highly destructive sport to the natural environment in shallow waters and close to shores. It is also dangerous to other users. Those other users don't call the police; they get off the lake until the board heads stop.

Economically, all the other public uses of our waters are much more valuable to Vermont's economy than wake surfing. Under the proposed rule, wake surfers will have plenty of venues for surfing - and in addition, most of them can afford to fly off to Hawaii, Southern California, or Cancun to enjoy "real" surfing.

Dani Sharpe, Lake Iroquois, Hinesburg

Dear ANR and DEC Rulemaking Team,

I respectfully submit this comment opposing the proposed 2025 wakesports expansion and supporting retention of the 2024 wake zone rule while Vermont continues gathering real-world data.

I am a frequent Vermont lake user. Some mornings I am in a kayak at first light. Other days I am fishing slowly along a shoreline. In the afternoons my family may be towing kids behind the boat at modest speeds. Because I experience the lake from multiple perspectives, I strongly support thoughtful, balanced safety rules. I also recognize that change was needed — and that change already occurred with the 2024 rule.

What I do not see in the current record is evidence that conditions since 2024 justify a statewide tightening of the framework, particularly given the petition data showing that approximately over 50% of petition lakes stated no wakeboat activity. That fact alone suggests caution before expanding restrictions beyond the existing compromise.

Buffer and Width Concerns

The proposed 1,000-foot corridor is derived from applying a 500-foot buffer on each side of the vessel. However, the supporting field observation was limited and not replicated under controlled conditions. Converting that single observational comparison into a universal “any object” separation standard materially reshapes lake eligibility without demonstrating that it is the minimum necessary distance in open water.

On many Vermont lakes, expanding the buffer to a full 500 feet from all objects risks compressing traffic into narrower remaining corridors, which can reduce maneuvering flexibility rather than improve real-world safety, plus there is no date, structured field data completed to confirm this is necessary beyond the current 200 ft rule in Vermont.

Run Length Mathematics

Using the Agency’s own three-minute ride premise:

- 10 mph → 2,640 feet
- 8 mph → 2,112 feet
- 7 mph → 1,848 feet

These are realistic operating speeds, especially for younger riders. None produce a 3,000-foot run in three minutes (and to be honest 11mph does not even equal 3,000ft)

. When applied to the 1,000-foot corridor, the acreage ranges roughly 42–61 acres, far below the proposed 100-acre threshold. The record itself acknowledges the acreage outcome is highly sensitive to these assumptions, which is what they are assumptions..

Education and Implementation Gap

In conversations at our local marina this past season, many responsible boaters were still learning the specifics of the 2024 rule. The Vermont boating handbook has not yet fully integrated the wakesports provisions into the same structured format as other major rules. Expanding restrictions while education remains incomplete is premature.

Recommended Path

I respectfully recommend:

Primary request: Maintain the 2024 wake zone rule and continue multi-season monitoring.

If the Agency proceeds regardless, please write the 2025 rule as follows:

- Minimum run: 2,200 feet
- Minimum lake size: 50 acres (consistent with 2024)

- Buffer: 225-300 feet (modest increase above current 200 ft rule in place))

This alternative would better align with observed operating ranges while preserving shared access and following with your rule rollout details.

Thank you

Danielle Budlong

Dear ANR and DEC Rulemaking Team,

I oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments.

I am a regular Vermont lake user who participates in multiple activities — paddling at dawn, fishing mid-day, and occasionally towing family members at modest speeds. Because I experience the lake from several perspectives, I support reasonable safety regulation. I also believe strongly that mathematics used in rulemaking must reflect measured reality, not layered assumptions.

What concerns me in the current proposal is that key numerical thresholds appear to be driven by assumed inputs rather than observed Vermont operating data.

Petition Statistics Are Being Treated as Predictive: The Agency's own summary indicates 7 of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity on their lakes as of 2025 season. That is not a trivial data point. When more than half of the petition lakes report no documented presence, the dataset does not demonstrate uniform statewide conditions.

Using precautionary concerns from largely unaffected lakes to justify a statewide tightening risks converting limited observational input into a broad exclusionary outcome. Statistics describing absence of activity should not be treated as evidence of demonstrated conflict.

—
The 3,000-Foot Run Is Not the Mathematical Result

Using basic kinematics:

Distance = Speed × Time

For a three-minute (180 second) ride:

- 10 mph → 2,640 feet
- 8 mph → 2,112 feet
- 7 mph → 1,848 feet

These are straightforward physical calculations. None produce a 3,000-foot run. Therefore, the 3,000-foot value is not a mathematical necessity — it is an added policy margin layered onto the model. When regulatory eligibility depends directly on run length, that distinction matters.

—
The 1,000-Foot Width Is Also Assumption-Driven: The corridor width flows from applying a 500-foot buffer on each side. However, the supporting field observation was limited and not replicated across varied lake conditions. A single observational comparison cannot establish a universal open-water separation requirement.

Because acreage equals length × width, the model compounds assumptions at both dimensions. Small changes in either input dramatically change the outcome.

Education Still Lagging Implementation: In discussions with a few of the boating instructors and online classes (as I rule a boat rental business in Vermont and noted that these new rules are not on the current tests) this past season, many responsible operators were still learning the specifics of the 2024 rule. The boating handbook has not yet fully integrated these provisions in the same structured format as other major rules. Expanding restrictions before completing education alignment is premature.

Recommendation

The prudent path is clear:

Primary: Maintain the 2024 rule and continue monitoring.

If modified:

- Run length: 2,000 ft
- Lake minimum: 50 acres
- Buffer: 300 ft

Respectfully submitted,
Russ Wilde

There should be no 500ft buffer for wake boats :(

ANR,

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports expansion.

I have spent decades on Vermont lakes — sometimes in a kayak at sunrise, and sometimes towing visiting family. I appreciate the need for safety rules and supported the changes made in 2024.

What concerns me now is the growing reliance on assumed geometry rather than observed Vermont operating patterns.

The petition summary itself shows that 7 of petition lakes have never had a wakeboat on them as of current date That is not evidence of a uniform statewide problem, to initiate a statewide rule expansion.

Likewise, following assumptions, is the three-minute ride premise , additionally it does not mathematically produce a 3,000-foot run:

- 10 mph → 2,640 ft
- 8 mph → 2,112 ft
- 11 mph → 2,940 ft

Because the acreage model multiplies this length by the assumed width, every additional assumption compounds the restriction.

The buffer width is similarly derived from limited observation rather than replicated testing.

Meanwhile, many boaters I spoke with last season are still learning the 2024 rule because handbook integration remains incomplete.

Change already happened in 2024. The record does not yet demonstrate the need for another statewide step.

Recommendation: Maintain the 2024 rule.

Fallback: Write the 2025 rule as 2,200 ft run / 50 acres / 215 ft buffer

Thank you

Courtney McGuire

Although I support the proposed DEC revisions, I believe they are a death sentence to the proposed wake boat designated lakes. The revisions in the Decontamination Section 3 require decontamination, but they also add the famous words “IF... available.” Vt decontamination locations are very few and mostly not near proposed wake boat permitted lakes, especially Willoughby, which has, by count, the highest number of annual put-ins.

There is absolutely no enforcement provision in the DEC proposals, contrary to what is being done in the rest of the country. (See partial summaries at LastWildernessAlliance.org and <https://dec.ny.gov>)

Wakeboats are unusually hard to decontaminate and they leave behind a disproportionate amount of AIS when in use. Vt DEC’s unfunded proposal for decontamination stations to come online within ten years is just too late to stop toxic AIS infections. Yet, contrary to its stated Mission, and unlawfully, DEC will not take even feeble steps, such as New York State’s downloadable self-certified Watercraft Transport Permit for Aquatic Invasive Species to deter one of Vermont’s most precious and valuable resources —its largely pristine lakes. I fail to see how the Legislature can allow this. This is a message I’ve expressed at three DEC public hearings and in letters previously.

At Willoughby Lake, the only lake in Vermont designated as a US National Natural Landmark, where my

family has owned property and paid Vt taxes for 50+ years, we had hoped to pass on our heritage. We resent DEC's invitation to all comers who may degrade the Lake and who contribute nothing.

I have some ideas that could be applied to wakesports. The absence of a safety plan, especially one that involves a wake boat, should be addressed. These are some of the most powerful recreational boats in the country, and getting more powerful. This could spell disaster and trigger an expensive lawsuit. It appears that New Hampshire has defined at least one safety measure that also applies to wake surfing.

"RSA 270-D:3 (New Hampshire)

(a) No person shall operate a motorboat while towing water skiers, aquaplanes, or similar devices, or while engaged in wake surfing, unless another person is present in the motorboat who is physically able to observe and assist the person or appurtenance being towed or wake surfing. The observer shall be 13 years of age or older."

I support requiring another person, who is at least 13 years of age, to act as a lookout when the boat is in wake sports mode. Note that in New Hampshire lookouts are also required for other sports, not just wake sports. Perhaps someone at ANR could call their NH counterpart to ask how this rule is playing out.

Music amps on some wake boats have gone upwards from about 400 amps to over 1500 amps. The early morning swimmer, fisherman, paddler or remote campsite folks do not want to be disturbed by this unnecessary early morning noise. There are ear buds designed for this application - let's use them. Most outdoors people would prefer listening to birds chirping in the still of the morning.

My name is Steve Sease and I am filing supplemental comments given the ANR's decision to reopen the comment period concerning its proposed amendments concerning wake boats.

A decision to reopen the comments seems to have been done with no basis. It ignores the fact that hundreds of commenters observed its original deadline, yet the ANR extended the comment period in response to a request from a wake boat proponent. This action appears prejudiced and works to the detriment of those who oppose wake boats or are concerned that the rule does not go far enough or should be further modified. The agency's objectivity appears compromised.

Safety

A 200 foot distance from an operating wake boat to a canoe, kayak, small boat, or swimmer is unsafe on its face. Amazingly, the agency has already noted in previous proceedings that it lacks expertise in swimmer and boater safety. This is an appalling admission by the agency charged with promulgation surface water rules that include safety, which should be a paramount concern! There is no justification for the present rule requiring a 500 foot separation to shorelines but allowing 200 feet to highly vulnerable swimmers and small boaters.

As an experienced boater I can say that while a 500 foot distance to swimmers and small boaters is vast improvement over the present rule, it may well prove to be inadequate in practice. There has been no objective demonstration that even 500 feet would be safe. A swimmer confronting the chain of waves produced by an operating wake boat, even at 500 feet, might well be endangered. Children in the water, inexperienced kayakers and canoers might well experience dangerous conditions even at 500 feet, the Agency should commit to continuous study of the issue of safety and should retain experts on the subject matter to provide a definitive safety limit.

The 500 foot zone is inadequate in another sense. Although it is widely perceived to be an attempt at a safety zone for swimmers and paddlers near shore, it ignores the fact that many small boaters like to paddle or sail away from shore. It is no fun to imagine tacking or coming about continuously to sail a small boat around the perimeter of a lake in a 500 foot "safety zone". Implicit in this "safety design" is the implication that it would be dangerous for small boaters to venture into open waters if wake boats are operating. From years of experience, I can say that paddling down the middle of a big lake on a good day is one of the great pleasures of canoeing or kayaking. But if a wake boat is out there, you're not gonna find me or most of my fellow paddlers on the water. Instead, we will be packing up our canoes or kayaks, and driving home in disgust.

Home Lake Rule and Invasive Aquatic Species

The Agency's proposal to drop the Home Lake rule appears arbitrary and capricious. It is a reasonable requirement to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species.

The Agency, ideally, would ban all boats with ballast tanks, bait wells, or other water containing apparatus which cannot be fully drained and cleaned. This requirement should apply across the board to all craft.

Public Trust Doctrine

The Agency's proposal to allow voters in municipalities to determine wake boat use also appears arbitrary, capricious, and contrary to the Public Trust Doctrine. I am not a property owner on a lake nor do I have a camp on such a lake. As a day trip user, allowing such a procedure will disenfranchise me from voting on my use and access to the waters of the state, which are held in the public trust. This is completely contrary to the existing petition process which allows people like me to comment on

proposed rules for lakes which I use.

to be continued in a new form

Other Issues

The agency has ignored or made light of other aspects of wake boats. The agency has done no analysis of the contribution of greenhouse gases of these large vessels with huge engines.

The agency ignores the noise that sound systems on these boats can produce, a significant of these craft. Loud music and roaring engines are emblematic of these boats, to the detriment of the peaceful enjoyment of the lake by other users.

The Agency's response to these and other issues is – well, there really aren't that many wake boats. This response is ridiculous on its face and ignores the potential for growth in wake boat use, as well as the potential for increase in the size of wake boats. The response has no substance and is capricious.

Enforcement

Enforcement is the Achilles Heel of the rules. In 50 years or more of paddling, I have seen wardens only a handful of times, and have been stopped perhaps twice to check on a PFD.

If there is no warden or police officer on the lake, there is no way to enforce infractions of the rule.

Some wake boat proponents allege that few complaints are filed – but if there is no warden or police officer on the lake, to whom, and when, does one complain?

Because the state is incapable of enforcing these public use rules, banning wake boats on all lakes of Vermont jurisdiction makes sense.

Summary

The proposed amendments are an improvement, but the Agency should make further changes as I have outlined, The best outcome would be to ban wake boats on all lakes of Vermont jurisdiction.

Respectfully submitted

Stephen Sease
Montpelier

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments.

After discussing the current rules with several fellow Vermont boaters this past season, I was struck by how many newly tested boaters remain unclear on key elements of the 2024 wake zone requirements (as they noted they were not taught then in their boating class online for Vermont) . That observation is not a criticism of the boating public — it is an implementation signal. Major operational rules are most effective when they are fully integrated into official education channels, clearly presented in the State's boating handbook, and consistently reinforced through instruction and outreach.

When significant restrictions are not fully embedded in standardized training materials, expanding the regulatory framework further risks creating uneven awareness rather than improved compliance.

The mathematical foundation of the proposed expansion also warrants caution. Using the Agency's own three-minute ride premise, a vessel traveling 10 mph covers approximately 2,640 feet, not 3,000. At 8 mph, the distance drops to roughly 2,112 feet.

These realistic operating speeds materially change the resulting acreage when applied to the same corridor model.

The rulemaking record itself acknowledges that modest changes in speed and buffer assumptions produce large shifts in eligibility outcomes.

In that context, adopting a fixed 100-acre minimum without fully demonstrating why lower mathematically supported values are insufficient raises legitimate least-restrictive concerns.

This issue is compounded by the petition context, which indicates that a little over 50% of petition lakes have never had a wakeboat on them.

Expanding statewide restrictions before fully educating the public and observing multi-season data appears premature.

I respectfully recommend that Vermont:

- Maintain the 2024 wake zone rule
- Fully integrate the rule into boating education materials
- • Monitor real-world conflicts through a multi-year meetings with key people

This measured approach will strengthen both safety and regulatory credibility.

Thank you for your consideration

Tara

Dear Vermont Water Resources Staff,

I am writing as a Vermont parent who spends many summer days on the water with my family. We paddle, we swim, we fish, and occasionally we pull our kids on a wakeboard at slower beginner speeds. Because we use the lake in so many ways, I care deeply about fair and workable safety rules.

I fully supported the changes made in the 2024 rule as a good middle ground compromise. Those updates already moved Vermont toward a more structured and cautious framework. What I do not see is evidence that conditions since then justify a further statewide tightening — especially when the petition summaries indicate that a majority of petition lakes did not document ongoing wakeboat activity.

Real-World Operating Speeds

When I am teaching riders, our boat typically runs between 7 and 9 mph. Using the three-minute ride concept:

7 mph → 1,848 feet

8 mph → 2,112 feet

10 mph → 2,640 feet

These distances fall well below the proposed 3,000-foot assumption. Because acreage equals length × width, the required lake size changes dramatically depending on which realistic speed you use.

Buffer Expansion Concerns

The proposed 500-foot “any object” buffer appears to be based on limited observational comparison rather than repeated open-water testing. On smaller or irregular Vermont lakes, increasing the effective corridor width can actually concentrate traffic into the remaining space.

As someone who paddles regularly, I value separation — but I also value predictable traffic patterns and sufficient maneuvering room.

Education Still Catching Up

At our lake this past season, several responsible boaters I spoke with were still unclear on the exact details of the 2024 wake zone requirements. The boating handbook update has not yet fully embedded these rules into the standard instructional flow.

Before expanding the framework further, the State should ensure the existing rule is fully understood and consistently taught.

Requested Outcome

Preferred: Maintain the 2024 rule and continue monitoring.

If modified:

- 2,200-foot run
- 50-acre minimum
- 215-foot buffer

This approach would reflect real-world boating patterns while still providing a safety margin.

I support the proposed rules on wakeboats, but they do not go far enough. In particular, the decontamination provisions are no good. My family and I have been going to Willoughby Lake for over 61 years. We own property and pay taxes there. Why should wakeboats be allowed to contaminate our wonderful lake?

Dear Vermont ANR/DEC Rulemaking Staff,

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule expansion and request that Vermont keep the 2024 wake zone rule in place while the Agency corrects the record, strengthens education, and collects replicated data.

I am a Vermont lake user who participates in multiple forms of recreation. I have watched how quickly misinformation spreads on this topic—especially from individuals and organized stakeholders who do not actually participate in wakesports towing, do not operate towboats, and therefore may misunderstand basic operating realities like speeds, rider runs, or safe navigation patterns. When those misunderstandings enter the record as “common sense,” they can unintentionally steer rulemaking away from measurable truth.

Petition Record: Weak Foundation for a Statewide Tightening

The Agency’s own summary indicates 7 of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity.

That is not the profile of a uniform statewide conflict requiring a significantly more restrictive statewide rule.

Math: Assumptions Cannot Be Upgraded Into Legal Thresholds

If the Agency relies on a 3-minute ride premise, the distance is:

10 mph → 2,640 ft

8 mph → 2,112 ft

7 mph → 1,848 ft

Setting 3,000 ft as a minimum while describing “3 minutes” is internally inconsistent.

Then the model multiplies that length by an assumed 1,000-ft width (from a 500-ft buffer each side) and uses that to justify 100 acres. The record itself recognizes the acreage outcome is highly sensitive to these inputs.

That sensitivity demands caution, not escalation.

One-Off Field Observation does not and should not assume Replicated Safety Standard

The practical observation described is not replicated and includes uncontrolled variables.

It does not establish the minimum necessary buffer for open-water safety, and it does not quantify turning needs (“dog-legging”) across different speeds and riders.

Education: The State Hasn’t Fully Taught the Existing Rule

The handbook update did not clearly integrate wakesports restrictions into standard instruction.

Expanding while education is incomplete undermines public trust.

Concern About Perceived Targets

Given public discussion that certain lakes (including Fairlee and Lake Iroquois) are focal points, the Agency should avoid any rule structure that appears engineered to exclude particular waterbodies via assumption-driven math. The solution is transparency: publish sensitivity analyses showing how outcomes change when speeds, run lengths, and widths vary.

Request: Keep the 2024 rule.

OR

Alternative narrative to the 2025 proposed rule : proceed: 2,200 ft run / 50 acres / 225 ft buffer, with a requirement for replicated testing before further expansion.

Dear DEC,

After reviewing the proposal and talking with other boaters at our launch, I oppose the 2025 expansion.

Education needs to be fully in place before new restrictions are added.

additionally The math also does not support jumping to 100 acres. At 10 mph for three minutes you only travel about 2,640 feet, and at 8 mph it is closer to 2,112 feet. (and even at 11mph, it still does not equal 3,000 feet.

That dramatically changes the acreage available and impacts eligibility .

With over half the petition lakes lacking wakeboat activity,

the State should slow down.

Keep the 2024 rule and stop moving forward based on advocacy that is not backed by science, math, real time facts, safety or conflicts

Respectfully,

Howard

To Whom It May Concern:

I live in the North East Kingdom and am a 75 year old kayaker. I have recreated in the Kingdom's lakes and ponds for 40+ years. I have had a stressful career in environmental health trying to improve indoor air quality for children in preschools and K-12 schools. Kayaking is my way of relaxing and leaving the stress of the world behind. Imagine my horror as I was quietly paddling along only to see a huge boat making huge waves that were heading my way. I paddled as fast as I could and got out of the way. This was my introduction to wake boats. I had never heard of them before this incident. The boat was also blaring loud music and disrupting the peace and quiet of all other lake users.

I believe that towns should be able to decide if they want to allow wake sports on their lakes. We should let the majority of the people, tax payers, decide this important issue. I no longer kayak on Lake Willoughby, the closest lake to my home, because I am terrified that a wake boat will swamp me. Allowing wake sports on our lakes and ponds discriminates against all the other users - paddlers, anglers, sailors, swimmers etc. I highly object to classifying wake sports as a normal use of waters. If you will not listen to the majority of lake and pond users in Vermont you must at the very least create the most stringent regulations such as those requested by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes.

Thank you.

Dear ANR Rulemaking Staff,

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments

I am concerned that the current proposal risks appearing outcome-driven because the thresholds are built from discretionary assumptions that compound toward exclusion.

Assumption Stacking: Length + Width + Turns

The length assumption does not mathematically match the 3-minute premise (10 mph yields 2,640 ft; 8 mph yields 2,112 ft).

The width assumption depends on a broad "any object" buffer supported by limited observation.

Turning space ("dog-legging") is implicitly treated as required but not measured.

When you multiply assumption-driven dimensions and then set a hard 100-acre gate, you have created a mechanism that can remove particular lakes—even without an explicit intent statement.

Petition Context

The record states 7 of petition lakes have never seen a wakeboat on them

This does not show statewide use or statewide conflict.

Transparency Request

If the Agency proceeds, it should be required to publish written findings showing:

- replicated open-water testing methods to prove their 3000 x 1000 x 100 acra (where this calculation is coming from)

- scenario tables for speeds/runs/widths
- and why less restrictive options were rejected

Given public concern about lakes such as Fairlee and Lake Iroquois, these findings are essential to avoid the appearance that modeling is being selected to reach predetermined exclusions.

I support to Maintain the 2024 rule, however as a compromise that makes mathematical sense using your methodology and least restrictive approach, i would support the 2025 rule being written as 2,000 ft / 50 acres / 210 ft buffer.

Thank you

I am a younger Vermont resident who actively participates in wakesurfing and wakeboarding during our short summer season. I also kayak regularly and spend quiet mornings fishing with my family. I respect all users on the water and fully understand why the State has worked to improve safety over the past few years.

I supported the changes made in the 2024 wake zone rule because they created clearer structure and expectations. From my time on the water since then, I have seen most operators making good-faith efforts to follow the rules and share space responsibly.

What I do not understand — and what does not make mathematical sense to me — is how the State has moved from that balanced 2024 framework to a proposed 3,000 ft × 1,000 ft → 100 acre standard that appears to be built on layered assumptions rather than real observed riding patterns.

Real-World Riding Speeds

As someone who actually rides, I can say firsthand that wakesports speeds vary widely depending on rider skill, boat setup, and activity. Using the Agency's own three-minute concept (180 seconds), the physics are straightforward:

- 7 mph → 1,848 feet
- 8 mph → 2,112 feet
- 9 mph → 2,376 feet
- 10 mph → 2,640 feet
- 11 mph → 2,904 feet
- 12 mph → 3,168 feet

This range reflects real operating conditions I personally see on Vermont lakes.

What stands out is that the commonly cited 3,000-foot run only occurs at the very upper end of the speed range — and even then only slightly exceeds it. Most beginner, youth, and many recreational surf sessions occur well below that threshold.

Even if some additional shaping or turning space is considered, the proposal does not provide replicated field testing that quantifies how much extra distance is actually required across different boats, riders, and lake geometries. Treating an assumed “dog-leg” or turning allowance as universally necessary — and then building a statewide acreage threshold from it — appears to be working backward from a desired number rather than forward from measured data.

Because acreage equals length × width, these assumptions compound quickly. When realistic run lengths are multiplied by the proposed 1,000-foot corridor, the resulting acreage varies dramatically and often falls far below 100 acres.

Buffer Width Concerns

I also question the universal 500-foot from any object approach. From real on-water experience, safety depends heavily on operator awareness, predictable traffic patterns, and having room to maneuver — not simply maximizing a fixed bubble in every direction.

My understanding is that the field comparison used to support this width was limited and not replicated under controlled conditions. Before that observation becomes a statewide geometric requirement, it should be validated across multiple Vermont lake environments.

Petition Record Does Not Show Statewide Need

The Agency's own summary indicates that majority of the petitioning lakes did not have wakeboat activity. That does not suggest a uniform statewide conflict requiring another major tightening.

Among people my age who boat, many are still learning the details of the 2024 rule because the boating handbook and education pipeline have not fully caught up yet, as we fall in the age that requires a boating license. . Expanding restrictions while education is still catching up seems premature.

I respectfully ask the Agency to: Keep the 2024 wake zone rule in place and continue monitoring real-world conditions.

However, If changes move forward anyway:

- Minimum run: 1,848 feet
- Minimum lake size: 50 acres (as currently written)
- Buffer: 205 feet

That would better reflect how wakesports actually operate while still providing a reasonable safety margin.

Thank you for considering input from someone who actively participates in these activities and cares deeply about Vermont

I am writing as a Vermont college student who spends most of my summers back home on the lake with my family. When I'm not at school, the lake is honestly where I spend most of my free time. Our boat is a big part of how we hang out together — whether that's fishing early in the morning, kayaking along the shoreline, floating and swimming with friends, or occasionally wakesurfing and wakeboarding.

Because I use the lake in so many different ways, I really do understand why the State has worked to improve safety. I actually supported the 2024 wake zone rule because it felt like a reasonable step that set clearer expectations for everyone. From what I saw last summer, most people on the water were still getting used to those changes and trying to do the right thing.

That's why the new proposal feels confusing and honestly rushed. Based on the petition summary, 7 of the lakes that submitted petitions have never had a wakboat on them. From my perspective as someone actually out there on the water, that doesn't really match the idea that there's a widespread statewide problem that suddenly requires another big change only a year later.

When I'm home for the summer, I'm usually the one driving when my friends want to ride. Speeds vary a lot depending on who's behind the boat.

Using the three-minute example that keeps getting referenced:

- 7 mph → about 1,848 feet
- 8 mph → about 2,112 feet
- 9 mph → about 2,376 feet
- 10 mph → about 2,640 feet
- 11 mph → about 2,904 feet
- 12 mph → about 3,168 feet

when we're teaching someone new — which happens a lot — we're usually closer to the 7–9 mph range, not the very top end.

So when I see the State using a 3,000-foot run as the baseline, it just doesn't line up with what many of us actually do. I'm not saying longer runs never happen — they do — but building the whole acreage rule around the high end doesn't reflect the full picture.

I also spend plenty of time kayaking, and I absolutely care about spacing and safety. But from being out there a lot, safety feels way more connected to awareness and predictable movement than to drawing the biggest possible bubble around every boat.

From what I understand, the 500-foot from any object concept comes from pretty limited field observation. If that testing wasn't repeated across different lakes, boats, and riders, it seems like a big leap to turn it into a fixed statewide geometry that determines which lakes qualify.

One thing I can say for sure: a lot of younger boaters are still figuring out the details of the 2024 changes, as a few of my friends took the course online this past summer and there were not questions or chapters on the wakesports zone. The handbook and safety info haven't totally caught up in a way that's super clear for newer operators.

Because of that, it feels early to tighten things again before the current rule has really had time to sink in and be fully understood.

My first choice: keep the 2024 wake zone rule in place and keep watching real conditions on Vermont lake and update the boating safety course asap.

If changes move forward anyway: I asked to follow your suggested layout and as for

- Minimum run: 2,100 feet, Minimum lake size: 50 acres, Buffer: 275 feet

Thanks for taking the time to hear from someone in my age group

I respectfully submit this comment in opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and in support of maintaining the existing 2024 wake zone rule while Vermont completes full evaluation, education, and multi-season monitoring.

I am a regular Vermont lake user who participates in multiple forms of recreation — including paddling, swimming, fishing, and occasional towed watersports with family. Because I experience the lake from different perspectives, I fully support reasonable safety protections and thoughtful management of shared public waters. I also recognize that meaningful changes were already made in the 2024 rule. My concern with the current proposal is more fundamental: the rule appears to be advancing ahead of clearly demonstrated applied science and internally consistent mathematics.

The Agency's own petition summary indicates that a majority of petition lakes — approximately seven of eleven — reported no established wakeboat activity while simultaneously expressing precautionary safety concerns.

This creates an important analytical question.

If a lake reports that the activity in question is not occurring in any meaningful way, then precautionary concern alone does not demonstrate an active conflict requiring a statewide regulatory escalation. At minimum, this mixed record suggests that conditions vary significantly across waterbodies and that the factual basis for uniform statewide tightening may not yet be fully developed.

The current proposal does not appear to reconcile this internal inconsistency.

Run-Length Mathematics Does Not Cleanly Support the Threshold

The proposal repeatedly references a three-minute ride concept. Basic kinematics show:

Distance = Speed × Time

Using realistic wakesport speeds:

- 9 mph → ~2,376 feet
- 10 mph → ~2,640 feet
- 11 mph → ~2,904 feet

Only at the extreme upper end of the speed range does a run exceed 3,000 feet.

Because the acreage model multiplies run length by width, small changes in these assumptions produce large differences in required lake size. The rulemaking materials themselves acknowledge this sensitivity. When a regulatory cutoff is highly assumption-dependent.

The proposed 500-foot “any object” buffer — which produces the 1,000-foot corridor — appears to rely in part on limited observational comparison rather than replicated, -water testing across varied Vermont conditions.

That distinction matters. as it does not establish the minimum necessary statewide separation distance.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask to : Maintain the 2024 wake zone rule

If the Agency determines changes must proceed: consider a more measured framework such as • Minimum run length: 2,200 feet, • Minimum lake size: 50 acres, , and Buffer of 225 feet

thank you again ,
Julia Michel

I am submitting this comment as a Lake Rescue property owner and wakeboat owner who has followed Vermont's evolving wakesports regulations very closely. My family has invested significantly in both our lakefront home and in responsible boating equipment, and we care deeply about the long-term health, safety, and shared enjoyment of Vermont waters.

Lake Rescue is already subject to substantial operational restrictions. As someone living with those limitations every season, I believe the State has already taken meaningful and impactful steps through the 2024 wake zone rule. From my direct on-water observations and discussions with neighbors, the current framework has materially changed behavior and operating patterns.

For that reason, I strongly oppose the proposed 2025 expansion.

Expansion Appears Request-Driven Rather Than Evidence-Driven

What is most concerning to me as a property owner is that this new proposal appears to be advancing largely in response to additional requests rather than new, clearly demonstrated statewide evidence.

The petition materials themselves indicate that several petition lakes reported safety concerns while simultaneously acknowledging that wakeboats were not present or not established on those waters. That internal inconsistency raises a fundamental policy question: precaution alone should not substitute for demonstrated conflict when adopting further statewide restrictions.

Before expanding rules that materially affect property use and recreational access, the Agency should be able to point to clear, Vermont-specific evidence showing that the 2024 framework is insufficient. At present, that showing does not appear to be in the record.

The Math Behind the 2025 Proposal Remains Unsettled

The proposed 3,000 ft × 1,000 ft → 100 acre construct also raises technical concerns.

Using standard distance calculations, a three-minute ride at commonly observed wakesport speeds often produces run lengths well below 3,000 feet. Because the acreage model multiplies run length by corridor width, the outcome is highly sensitive to the assumptions selected.

Additionally, the 1,000-foot corridor depends on a broad 500-foot "any object" buffer that does not appear to have been validated through replicated open-water testing across varied Vermont conditions.

When regulatory thresholds are this assumption-sensitive, it is important that they be grounded in clearly demonstrated applied math and science rather than policy preference.

Real Economic and Property Impacts Are Occurring

As a Lake Rescue homeowner, I have already experienced measurable impacts from the existing restrictions — both in terms of how we can use our property and the market perception of wake-capable boats on restricted lakes.

Each additional regulatory layer compounds those impacts. Continued expansion without a clearly supported evidentiary basis creates growing concern among property owners about regulatory stability

and long-term investment expectations.

I say this respectfully but candidly: if the State continues to expand restrictions each time new requests are submitted — without clearly demonstrated need and defensible technical grounding — it is reasonable to expect increased advocacy and potential legal scrutiny from affected stakeholders.

My Position

I oppose the 2025 rule as written and strongly urge the Agency to maintain the existing 2024 framework while continuing education, monitoring, and stakeholder dialogue.

If the Agency Determines Changes Must Proceed

If the State nevertheless moves forward, I recommend a framework that more closely follows the actual math sensitivity of the model:

Run length: 1,800 feet

Corridor width: 250 feet

Minimum lake size: 50 acres

This would better reflect observed operating realities while still providing structured safety margins.

Thank you for your time and for carefully weighing the real-world impacts of further restrictions on Vermont lake communities.

As someone that spent many years in my professional life working with farms under a great deal of pressure to meet state regulations and reduce their impact on water quality, and particularly the reduction of phosphorus, it is more than disturbing to see the state so willing to accept the use of a pleasure vehicle that brings equal, if not considerably more impact, to water quality, especially on small bodies of water. The hypocrisy is ugly.

I have heard many stories from friends and relatives in the last few years, in the state of Minnesota - of how destructive these boats are to the fishing, recreation and water quality in that state. "Churned up chocolate milk" is how they describe it.

They feel great loss at no longer being able to swim, fish, canoe, or even sitting on the shore as it's so noisy

I am writing as a Vermont school teacher and mother of two young boys who recently earned their boating licenses. Our family spends our summers on Lake Bomoseen, where we are still very much in the learning phase of responsible boat ownership and shared water use.

I want to begin by saying that I fully support reasonable safety rules. As an educator and a parent, safety is always my first priority. I appreciated that the State took action with the 2024 wake zone rule, and I believe many families like mine are still in the process of understanding and adapting to those changes.

In fact, I will be honest — my boys completed their boating safety course online and passed their test, and it was not until we purchased our boat from our local marina on Lake Bomoseen that we fully understood the practical details of the current wake zone restrictions. That experience alone tells me the education and communication process is still catching up.

Because of that, I am concerned that the State is now considering expanding the rule again before the existing framework has been fully absorbed by newer boating families.

Additionally, we have never had an issue sharing the water with wakeboats (as we do not have one) and find that they are on the water, but only for about 30 minutes doing their sport in a day's time, otherwise they are floating and swimming like the rest of us in between sport sessions behind the boat.

Based on my own family's experience, and conversations with other parents at the launch, many newer boaters are still learning the details of the 2024 rule. The boating handbook and safety messaging have not fully caught up in a way that is clear to everyone entering the boating community.

Before expanding the rule further, I strongly believe the State should ensure that the current requirements are fully understood and consistently taught.

I respectfully oppose the 2025 rule as written and ask the Agency to allow more time for the 2024 framework to be fully implemented, taught, and evaluated.

If the Agency determines that adjustments must be made, I would encourage consideration of a more measured approach such as less restriction, maybe 1,500 feet long by 500 feet wide by 50 acres as the minimum.

As both an educator and a parent, my goal is simple: safe waters that are also fair and understandable for families who are trying to do the right thing.

Thank you for your time and for listening to Vermont families who are still learning the ropes.

Courtney

I am writing as a Vermont lake user and personal watercraft owner who truly loves and respects our state's waters. I spend a lot of my summer on the lake, and like many Vermonters, that time on the water is one of the things my family and I look forward to all year.

I want to be clear from the start — I understand that some restrictions are necessary. Not every lake can support every activity, and I respect the State's responsibility to manage our waters carefully. I have always tried to operate responsibly, be aware of others around me, and follow the rules that are in place.

What is becoming harder to understand is why the rules keep expanding.

From where I sit as someone actually using the water, it feels like Vermont already made meaningful changes with the 2024 wake zone rule. People have been adjusting. Behavior has been changing. Many of us are still learning the details and trying to do things the right way.

But now, before that rule has even fully settled in, we are looking at another significant expansion.

Concern About How We Got Here, as one thing that worries me is the growing sense that this process is being driven more by the volume of advocacy than by clear, consistent evidence from the water itself.

I have listened to a lot of the public discussion around this issue, and it is obvious that some of the loudest voices pushing for additional restrictions are not people who actually participate in these activities. Everyone absolutely has the right to share concerns — I respect that — but when policy starts moving based on secondhand assumptions or worst-case perceptions rather than balanced real-world experience, it risks going too far.

It is especially confusing to see that several of the lakes raising safety concerns have also indicated that wakeboats are not even present in meaningful numbers on their waters. As an everyday lake user, that disconnect is hard to ignore.

A Feeling of Moving Goalposts, As someone who already understands what it means to be restricted on certain lakes with a personal watercraft, I accepted those limits because they were clear and established.

What is concerning now is the pattern. If rules continue to tighten each time new pressure is applied — without clear evidence that the previous changes were insufficient — it starts to feel less like careful management and more like an ever-moving target for responsible boaters.

That kind of uncertainty matters to families who invest in boats, who plan their summers around these lakes, and who are genuinely trying to follow the rules.

I respectfully oppose the 2025 rule as currently written.

I believe Vermont has already taken significant steps with the 2024 framework, and the State should allow time for education, adjustment, and real-world monitoring before considering further expansion.

If the Agency ultimately feels changes are necessary, I strongly encourage a more measured and balanced approach that reflects how these waters are actually being used today.

At the end of the day, most of us out here — whether we are on jet skis, kayaks, fishing boats, or towboats — want the same thing: safe, shared lakes that remain accessible and fair for everyone.

I hope the final decision reflects that balance.

I am writing as someone in my mid-20s who spends part of each summer vacationing in Vermont with family. I live in Florida most of the year, but Vermont has become a place I really value for its lakes, scenery, and slower pace of life.

Before coming up this past season, I made a point to do things the right way. I completed the Vermont-approved boating safety course online and became certified because I knew I would be spending time on the water with family. I took the course seriously and felt confident that I understood Vermont's boating expectations.

However, once I arrived and spent time on the lake with relatives who own a wakeboat, I realized something that concerned me.

The course I completed — which was approved for Vermont — did not meaningfully prepare me for the specific wakeboat rules that are now being expanded.

That disconnect is the main reason I felt compelled to submit this comment.

As someone who is new to Vermont boating but tried to follow the proper steps, I was surprised by how much of the practical wake zone information I only learned informally — through conversations at the lake and from family members — rather than through the official course material I was tested on.

If someone like me, who made the effort to get properly certified before arriving, is still missing key operational details, that suggests the education pipeline has not fully caught up with the regulatory changes already made in 2024.

From my perspective, it feels premature to expand the rules further when the current requirements are not yet being clearly communicated to newer boaters entering the system.

I want to be very clear that I support reasonable safety measures. Vermont's lakes are special, and they should be protected thoughtfully.

At the same time, good regulation should be understandable and teachable. If the State continues to add layers of restriction while the official education materials lag behind, it creates confusion for people who are genuinely trying to comply.

As an out-of-state visitor who specifically sought out Vermont's approved training, I expected that what I was tested on would fully reflect the operational reality I would encounter on the water. That was not my experience.

I have also followed some of the public discussion around this issue, and it seems that additional restrictions are being considered even though many boaters are still adjusting to the 2024 framework.

From a newcomer's perspective, it would make sense to:

fully align education materials,
allow time for the current rule to be understood, and
monitor real-world conditions

before moving forward with another statewide expansion.

I oppose the 2025 rule as currently written and encourage the Agency to focus first on closing the education gap and evaluating how the 2024 rule is working in practice.

Vermont's lakes are one of the reasons people like me keep coming back each summer. Clear, consistent, and well-communicated rules will help ensure visitors and residents alike can use them safely and responsibly.

Thank you for considering input from someone who is new to Vermont boating but is genuinely trying to follow the rules the right way.

Luke

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports rule as currently drafted and to respectfully ask the Agency to pause and carefully reconcile the underlying record before moving forward.

After spending time reviewing the supporting materials, petition summaries, and the structure of the proposed rule itself, I find myself genuinely confused about how the process arrived at this point. My concern is not rooted in opposition to safety — I fully support reasonable, evidence-based protections on Vermont waters — but rather in the apparent disconnect between the stated factual basis and the scope of the proposed changes.

The Petition Record Appears Internally Mixed From the materials provided on the anr site, it appears that among the lakes that petitioned:

some reported no established wakeboat presence, and others expressed precautionary safety concerns, yet there is limited indication in the record of documented incidents, verified conflicts, or enforcement data demonstrating a widespread operational problem.

This creates an important analytical tension. When a waterbody reports that the activity in question is not meaningfully occurring, precautionary concern alone may not demonstrate the type of active conflict that typically supports broad statewide structural changes. At the same time, where concerns are expressed, the absence of clearly documented incident data makes it difficult to understand the scale and immediacy of the problem being addressed.

Taken together, the petition landscape appears more varied and localized than uniform.
The Scope of the Proposed Rule Appears to Extend Beyond the Petitions

Another point of confusion is that the proposed changes to acreage thresholds and wakesports zone structure appear to originate primarily from Agency modeling rather than from a direct, consistent request across the petitioning lakes.

In other words, the rule as written seems to move beyond simply responding to specific local concerns and instead establishes a broader geometric framework that materially affects lake eligibility statewide.

If that is the Agency's intent, it would be helpful for the record to clearly explain the evidentiary bridge between the petition inputs and the chosen statewide numerical thresholds.

Alignment Between Math, Science, and Safety Is Not Clearly Demonstrated

Perhaps most importantly, when reviewing the materials, it is difficult to see a clean alignment between these as;

the mathematical assumptions used to construct the corridor model,

the scientific literature cited regarding wake effects, and

the practical safety outcomes the rule is intended to achieve.

Each of these elements appears to exist in the record, but the connection among them is not always

clear or consistently demonstrated. When major eligibility thresholds hinge on those relationships, that lack of visible alignment creates uncertainty for the public trying to understand the basis for the rule.

A More Measured Path Forward given these concerns, I respectfully urge the Agency to:

maintain the 2024 wake zone rule for the present time, and engage stakeholders in an open, transparent review of real-world conditions and why the petitions were really put in place other than a request for a ban all together of a type of vessel.

If adjustments are ultimately deemed necessary, they should clearly demonstrate alignment between documented conditions, applied mathematics, and validated safety outcomes.

Thank you for taking the time to carefully consider public input and for your continued work managing Vermont's shared waters.

I am writing to request that wake sports should not be permitted on Vermont lakes. Growing up around NEK waters, the preservation of the lake and those that inhabit it is very dear to me. Wake boats and wake sports pose major threats to those wanting to enjoy the lake, as well as the wildlife that depends on a safe aquatic environment.

Are we still talking about Wake boats ? Who are these people who have so little to do that will cruise around our lakes to make wakes. If they don't like the waves on Vt lakes let them go Jersey where there a ample waves to play in.

My name is Peggie Bissell and I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding the operation of wake boats on Lake Fairlee. I have the unique perspective of someone who was a camper at Billings for 10 years, had a son attend as many years, enjoyed many summers on Lake Morey at our family camp, and who, for the last 12 years, has lived on Lake Morey for 6 months out the year. I am a resident of Fairlee but have a home in Thetford and spend the winter months there. I am very familiar with lake living, and the interactions that occur on a daily basis between the various recreational vessels, and the people both in and out of those vessels, and on or in the water.

While Lake Fairlee is a shared resource for all to enjoy, the unique mechanics of wake-enhancing technology pose a significant and disproportionate risk to the safety of the children attending local summer camps, of which there are several. Enhanced wakes possess higher energy and height, which can easily swamp small canoes, kayaks, and sailing dinghies used by campers. The downward thrust these boats create, creates unpredictable turbulence that can disorient young swimmers near docks or swim lines. The accelerated shoreline erosion caused by these waves impairs natural shallow water environments where young children and campers learn to swim and explore nature. I have watched the impact of a wake boat wave on our shore line on Lake Morey. A lake is a lake! The waves from a wake boat out in the middle of the lake are barely noticeable until they get closer to shore. It's incredible to see the height and the power of them crashing over the rock retaining wall on front of our shoreline! We are sure to get our granddaughter up and out of the water when this happens. I personally check the lake before taking out my paddle board and avoid doing so when a wake boat is in use. The campers and other children on Lake Fairlee deserve better. There is a fundamental incompatibility between high impact wake surfing and the high density youth recreation that defines Lake Fairlee. I remember my first times taking out both row and sailboats when I was a camper there and hoping the ski boats would stay clear. A wake boat is so much more powerful. Our priority must be the safety of these children. We cannot wait for a capsizing incident or swimming injury to happen. I support a ban on wake boats on Lake Fairlee.

Respectfully,
Peggie Bissell
Former Coordinator of Lake Morey Greeter Program
Former Board Member / Lake Morey Protective Association

I applaud the DEC's proposed new rules that will improve the safety of others on or near the water when wake boats operate in wakesports mode.

In a previous communication filed earlier during this public comment period, I made a number of suggestions to strengthen the rules further, and I expressed my concerns about concentrating wakesports on a small number of Vermont's most beautiful, most pristine lakes - Willoughby among them. I hope that some of those concerns will be addressed in the rules that are eventually presented to LCAR. I remain extremely concerned about inadequate protection of our remaining wakesports eligible lakes from further spread of aquatic invasive species, particularly zebra mussels. Based on testimony at both public hearings, that is a concern shared by virtually everyone.

It is no secret that the boating industry has been engaged in a massive effort to prevent or minimize regulation of wakesports in states across the country. Even so, I was surprised by the industry's last minute attempt to hijack the current rulemaking process here in Vermont and its request to delay action on the proposed rules until after the 2026 boating season.

Please do not let any special interest group, any individual, or anything else further delay this process or persuade you to abandon it. Regardless of my concerns, I believe it is absolutely critical the DEC remains laser focused on what needs to be done to process public comment and be ready as soon as possible for presentation to LCAR. Having these amended rules in place for the 2026 boating season must be of the highest priority.

Wakeboats are a menace to family swimmers, kayakers ,canoes, and even party boaters .They churn up phosphorus creating poisonous cyanobacteria poisoning people and pets. Their wake can toss over precious loon nesting platforms, slam smaller boats against docks, erode beaches, affect fish breeding grounds and toss kayaking children and grandmas into the drink.Lake swimmers are at great risk because they can be unseen. If owners move their boats to a different lake we have no way to insure their ballast tanks are not carrying invasives to the next. We only have 9 lakes in Vt that do not have invasives..yet. Wakeboats are made for the ocean and big lakes. Not Here.

Wake boats are not regular motorized boats at all and use of them is not a normal use of lakes of any size. They are loud wave-making machines that endanger and disrupt wildlife and the shoreline and also put other users of lakes at risk. Please do not allow any wake boats in Vermont.

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2/27/26

All of us are familiar with the stated importance of preserving the 200-foot from shore no-wake-zone (NWZ) rule. This rule provides safety and protection for our shorelines. The NWZ rule clearly states that boats operating within this zone, that is, within 200 feet from shore will not create wakes, and will not go more than 5 mph. We owe a lot to those who created and adopted this state-wide inland lakes rule.

30+ years ago, long before wake boats came on the scene, those before us created a relatively safe zone for children to play in, an area where nature lovers can relax in peace and quiet, a zone where our small boats are somewhat protected, and a thriving environment for habitat – on all inland lakes.

Although we have asked for a wake distance of 700 to 1,000 feet from shore, the final distance ended up at 500 feet from shore. Realistically, this leaves a distance of 300 feet for the wake to dissipate because that last 200-feet is A NO-WAKE ZONE!!! In other words, the so-called 200-foot-from-shore NO WAKE ZONE is anything but a no-wake-zone; it is a wakeboat wake-dissipation zone. On every lake where wake sports are allowed, let's make it 700-feet from shore. Or better yet, go to where it should be, 1,000 feet from shore. This 200 feet is where many paddlers, canoeists, swimmers, anglers and more go to for safety.

I know that everyone at ANR understands this, and I understand that there is political pressure in all directions. I ask only that you give it your best shot. From my perspective I ask that you try to look at it from our perspective. We are in the trenches daily. The staff at UMIAK, the staff and users of the Adaptive Sports community, the many fisher-people, and yes, the animals for whose kingdom this is.

Ask wakesporters what measures they are taking to protect our waters. Remind them that we are here as guests of the Waterbury Reservoir's diverse ecosystem, commonly featuring loons, bald eagles, ospreys, great blue herons, and belted kingfishers. Mammals include beavers, otters, minks, white-tailed deer, and coyotes. Fish, popular for fishing, include rainbow/brown trout, smallmouth bass, and yellow perch. Let's be respectful of their home!

I have spent decades working directly with Vermont boating families, lake associations, and state regulators. Our business has always supported thoughtful stewardship of Vermont waters, responsible boating practices, and reasonable regulation that is grounded in real-world conditions.

I am writing today to express my opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports rule as currently drafted and, more importantly, to speak to how we arrived at this point.

The Process Has Lacked Sustained, Open Dialogue

Over many years in this industry, I have learned that durable water policy only works when all affected groups are consistently at the same table — not just during formal hearings or occasional private meetings, but through ongoing, transparent dialogue where concerns can be tested against real operating facts.

Had there been a sustained working group that included:

- lake residents,
- paddlers,
- wakesports participants,
- marine businesses, and
- Agency staff

I believe much of the current tension and confusion could have been avoided.

What we are seeing now appears to be driven in part by fear on some lakes about what may come in the future, rather than by consistently documented conditions across the state. Those concerns deserve to be heard — but they also need to be examined alongside actual usage patterns, enforcement experience, and the adjustments that have already occurred under the 2024 rule.

Evolution Works Only When It Is Balanced

Regulation, like the boating industry itself, evolves. Sometimes forward. Sometimes in ways that require adjustment. Sometimes larger, sometimes more refined.

But sustainable evolution only happens when the process brings people along together.

When change moves ahead without that balance, one group inevitably feels left behind. At this moment, many in the wakesports community — including responsible operators and families who have invested in compliant equipment — feel exactly that.

That outcome does not reflect Vermont's long tradition of practical, community-based problem solving.

The Record Shows Mixed Conditions

The petition materials themselves reflect varied conditions across lakes, including situations where wakeboat activity was not documented as an established presence. At the same time, the 2024 wake zone rule already implemented meaningful structural changes that many boaters and businesses are still working to fully absorb and educate around.

Before expanding the framework further, it would be prudent to allow:

- full education alignment,
- multi-season monitoring of the 2024 rule, and
- structured stakeholder dialogue focused on real Vermont data.

A Better Path Forward

I respectfully urge the Agency to pause the proposed 2025 expansion and maintain the current 2024 framework while convening a true roundtable process that includes all affected users in a consistent, transparent forum.

If additional refinements are ultimately needed, they should emerge from:

- shared data,
- replicated field understanding, and
- collaborative problem-solving.

That is how Vermont has historically found durable solutions that stand the test of time.

Woodard Marine and the broader wakesports community stand ready to participate constructively in that process. Our goal is not conflict — it is workable, science-informed policy that keeps Vermont waters safe while remaining fair to the families and small businesses who depend on them. Thank you for your time and for your continued stewardship of Vermont's public waters.

I think it would be smart of Vermont and our bordering states of Quebec, New York, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire to start a discussion as to how we can work towards protecting each other's aquatic resources.

Lake Willoughby, National Natural Landmark, gathering spa of Loons which summer neighboring lakes, warrants and deserves protection from invasive aquatic species and AIS's potentially greatest carrier, the wake boat. As DEC/ANR is aware, huge work is done to protect the Willoughby treasure.

Wake boats and wakesports do not belong on Lake Willoughby. Short of securing that protection, please widen the standoff zone between wakesports and other users. More restriction of wakesports.
David Bradshaw`

I write in support of the new draft USE OF PUBLIC WATERS RULE. It includes important guidelines for the safety of both humans and wildlife such as;

-100 contiguous acres, -500 feet away from shore, other boats, rafts, docks and loon nests, -shape normalization and -designates a 'run' as 3000' in length.

-if a lake has no resident wake boats on it, NO wake boats should be permitted -if a lake is A-1 eligible, NO wake boats should be permitted -wake boats need to remain in one lake. If they can't declare a lake to reside in, they must only be permitted to trailer their boat to a state authorized decontamination station before entering a sanctioned lake. Out of state boaters must be directed to a decontamination station prior to entrance to any wake boat sanctioned lake.

I support these key elements:

Increasing the minimum size of the wakesports zone (WSZ) from 50 to 100 acres (This will reduce the number of wakesports eligible lakes from 30 to 18.)

Explicitly requiring that a WSZ must accommodate a 3,000 ft run

Prohibiting wakesports within 500 ft of other users and nesting loons

Clarifying that wake boat decontamination is required before entering a lake I urge you to incorporate new science and the Precautionary Principle to better protect Vermont's waters and users. We recommend: Minimum 30-foot water depth requirement (Supported by new studies, including the Lake Waramaug research. [LINK](#)) 700-foot setback from shorelines, loon nests, and other lake users (The St. Anthony Falls Laboratory study recommended over 500 ft for wave height and, more importantly, 600 ft for wave power. During the initial drafting of the 2024 rule, the DEC staff recommended 600 ft. Incorporating the Precautionary Principle supports a 700 ft setback.) Adding an explicit statement of and commitment to the Precautionary Principle within the UPWR such as this:

I support the proposed rules that increase the setback and with this new setback wakesports would be prohibited on Lake Fairlee. I am a waterfront property owner on Lake Fairlee. I have watched our children and now our nine grandchildren have no fear of playing anywhere on the Lake. But I have also watched them have some frightening experiences with wakeboats coming by and the need to hold on to flotation for dear life and help the younger ones stay afloat until the rougher waves subside. This is not what we expected when we invested in waterfront property on a family oriented small Lake. To have fun with their sport, let the wakeboat enthusiasts go to a larger lake that will dissipate the waves over more distance! . Lake Fairlee is just too narrow to have this type of recreational activity. It would help out to avoid contamination of our clean Lake Fairlee by keeping the Home Rule in place so decontamination is at the most stringent level possible. We need all the help we can get to keep the Lake as clean as possible, it is not easy to do.

I am a long time resident of Thetford, VT, and have utilized Lake Fairlee many, many times for swimming, canoeing, and skating. I have seen wake boats close up and seen the impact along the front of a small cottage, while in a canoe, and when swimming at the town beach. Typical power boats create plenty of wake all by themselves, but wakeboats are ridiculous on a lake (90 acres) the size of Lake Fairlee. Please make permanent the 100 acre minimum that is already in the process of being implemented in Vermont. Occasional visitors do not get to decide the fate of our local lakes! Thank you, Sally Duston Whitlock (see above)

As a waterfront owner on Seymour Lake Vt my husband and I strongly support the home lake rule referring to wake boats. We would like it applied to our lake which is well-known as one of the most pristine lakes left in the region. We would like to completely ban wake boats that have been used in other lakes from launching in Seymour Lake due to the potential of contamination from invasive species brought in from other lakes. As well, the public launch at Seymour Lake should have inspection and proper cleaning stations. There are dedicated, hard-working volunteers at the public launch who need infrastructure and support to keep Seymour Lake one of Vermont's natural treasures

If it is not possible to restrict these boats to a home lake each season, I have serious concerns regarding the transfer of invasives between lakes. How likely is it that, with a limited state budget, Vermont will have the resources to make restrictions and cleaning services available so that these boats don't wreck all of our beautiful clean waterways? A longtime kayaker who has frequently paddled across Willoughby, I believe the waves from these boats will cause a drowning.

I am writing to submit public comment in opposition to the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters Rules regulating wakesports, and to urge the Department to adopt stronger protections, particularly for Lake Willoughby. I have written to DEC several times on this issue as a full-time Westmore resident, community advocate, and environmental steward, and I appreciate the opportunity to again share my concerns during this final comment period.

While I recognize and appreciate DEC's efforts to revise the statewide rule, and acknowledge that some proposed changes represent improvements, the current proposal does not go far enough to protect Vermont's most ecologically sensitive and iconic lakes. In the case of Lake Willoughby, the proposed rules may actually result in increased wakesports activity, placing this unique and fragile resource at greater risk.

Lake Willoughby is the only lake in Vermont designated as a National Natural Landmark by the federal government. It is an irreplaceable natural asset, valued not only for recreation but also for its ecological integrity, scenic character, and cultural significance. As such, it deserves special consideration and stronger protections than those afforded under a uniform statewide approach.

I support elements of the proposed changes, including increased safety buffers and larger minimum wakesports zones. However, because Willoughby will remain eligible for wakesports under the revised rules, these changes may unintentionally concentrate wakesports activity on a smaller number of remaining lakes, many of which, like Willoughby, are among the most pristine in the Northeast Kingdom.

I am particularly concerned about the increased risk of aquatic invasive species (AIS). The removal of the Home Lake Rule eliminates the strongest existing safeguard against AIS spread for wakesports-eligible lakes. While the proposed requirement for hot water decontamination of ballast tanks or bags is a step in the right direction, decontamination facilities are not widely available. Importantly, Lake Willoughby does not currently have a wash or decontamination station. Without accessible infrastructure, it is unclear how boaters are expected to realistically comply with these requirements. With zebra mussels present in Lake Memphremagog and nearby Canadian waters, this lack of infrastructure poses a serious and preventable risk. If the Home Lake Rule is removed, DEC must pair this change with dedicated funding, expanded infrastructure, and clear enforcement mechanisms. For these reasons, I strongly urge DEC to retain the Home Lake Rule.

I also strongly support Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes' recommendations to further strengthen the rule, including:

- Increasing the minimum operating depth from 20 to 30 feet, consistent with recent research.
- Increasing minimum setbacks from shorelines, loon nests, lake structures, and other lake users from 500 to at least 700 feet.
- Explicitly adopting the Precautionary Principle within the Use of Public Waters Rules.
- Clarifying that wakesports are not a "normal" use of public waters and therefore require special consideration and stronger, distinct standards.

Finally, effective enforcement is essential. Regulations without consistent enforcement and adequate infrastructure place the burden on local residents and environmental stewards rather than ensuring equitable compliance across Vermont's lakes. Additionally, as the federal and state funding landscape continues to shift and resources become increasingly constrained, it is unclear how mitigation, monitoring, enforcement, and infrastructure needs can be sustainably funded without additional dedicated revenue tied to wakesports activity (or other recreation activity in our region). (Continued in the next box)

I grew up in Westmore and am now proud to be raising my young children here. Over the past decade, we have seen a significant shift in how Lake Willoughby is used, with increased traffic and pressure on the lake that is unlikely to reverse. Precisely because this change is not going away, now is the time to be proactive in protecting this extraordinary natural resource for generations to come. Many neighboring states and lakes have been permanently altered by increased water traffic and the spread of invasive species. Vermont has an opportunity to learn from those experiences and make conscious, precautionary decisions that support and protect our state's natural resources, not degrade them. I have also worked for the State of Vermont for the past 14 years in public health, where we often say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. That principle applies here as well. I urge DEC to strongly consider the voices of the communities who live on and steward these lakes year-round, not only those who visit for recreation. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to submit comment.

Please limit wake sports in Vermont. Please limit wake sports on Waterbury reservoir. It is mostly a paddle culture and quite small.

I have been active in boating from my youth to the present. kayaks, canoes, outboard runabouts, water ski boats, hydroplanes, small (12') and large (34') sailboats and have owned and operated a 30' cabin cruiser since 2013. I have never owned a vessel for "wakesports", but have encountered these vessels while operating my owned vessels (except the hydroplane) in open waters and can tell you the waves they generate impede on safe navigation. With small vessels, the "wakesport" vessels create a stability challenge because they create extreme wave peak heights and troughs and short horizontal distance between crest peaks demanding much skill to maintain vessel stability while riding through the wave. Even larger vessels like my 34' sloop sailboat and 30' cabin cruiser are adversely affected such that if one is not paying attention and recognize the "wakesport" wave approaching, it can create vessel instability that can throw one from one side of the helm to the other. The "wakesport" wave does not dissipate over a short distance. These waves are especially dangerous to paddle boat and small outboard motor vessels operating close

to and along the shoreline. These waves bounce back when hitting the shore and create a wave in the opposite direction colliding with the inbound waves thereby making in " unsafe "wakesport" waves turbulence in the shoreline zone. This is in addition to the obvious environmental affect on the shoreline, shoreline vegetation and species habitat.

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to the Department of Environmental Conservation's proposal to eliminate the Home Lake Rule for wake boats. This provision is a critical safeguard for Vermont's lakes and its removal significantly increases the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Wake boats pose a uniquely high AIS risk because their ballast systems cannot be fully drained. As a result, these vessels routinely retain water that may contain invasive species, pathogens, or algae. Even with cleaning protocols, complete decontamination is not reliably achievable. The Home Lake Rule directly addressed this risk by limiting wake boats to a single, designated lake, thereby reducing cross-lake transmission. Eliminating this rule removes one of the most effective preventative tools currently available.

The proposed changes also reduce the number of lakes approved for wake boat use from 30 to 18. While Seymour Lake remains on that list, this reduction will concentrate wake boat activity and make it more likely that non-resident wake boat owners will choose Seymour as a destination. Increased transient use raises both environmental risks and conflicts on lakes not designed to absorb this level of traffic.

Additionally, the new rule requires decontamination even when no facilities exist to provide it. This creates an unenforceable standard that relies on voluntary compliance rather than effective prevention. Without accessible, mandatory decontamination infrastructure, this requirement offers little real protection while shifting responsibility onto lake communities.

Most concerning, the revised rule prohibits greeters from turning away a watercraft, even when there is a reasonable concern that it may be contaminated with AIS. This restriction undermines inspection programs and removes the last meaningful line of defense for uninfected lakes. At a time when Vermont is already losing ground in the fight against AIS, weakening inspection authority is both illogical and dangerous.

The Home Lake Rule was a reasonable, science-based compromise that allowed wake boat recreation while prioritizing lake protection. Its elimination increases risk, reduces enforceability, and places irreversible consequences on individual lakes and communities.

I urge the Department to retain the Home Lake Rule and adopt policies that reflect the reality that prevention is far less costly—and far more effective—than remediation.

Thank you for your consideration.

I own a lakeside camp on Seymour and have seen the damage caused by their waves - both to the shoreline and to quiet water craft. I accept that Seymour is a larger body of water which can accomodate wake boats. Lake Seymour is also one of the LAST pristine lakes in Vermont. Why would you heighten the risk of contamination from milfoil or other invasives to this lake by

reducing how many make home lakes exist while also removing any authority to our greeters to turn away boats? Do we want all our lakes to turn into Carmi?

I have been swimming, canoeing, fishing and now paddle-boarding my entire life. At age 62 I sincerely hope that this same opportunity will remain for my children and grandchildren. My children have been both campers and counselors on the lake where they have been fortunate to swim in the dawn of morning and in the evening dusk. Please ensure the beauty and serenity of this special lake so others can continue to experience these things. Additionally, the waves that have hit our beach area from wake-boats have forced us to rapidly pull happy toddlers out of the water. Yikes! It is just too small for wake-boats!

I am a Vermont resident, property owner and a member of the Lake Fairlee Association. Wake boats are used and supported by a very small number of people who have property on the lake, but they are using their out of state family and friends to override the concerns of those of the majority of us who live on the lake. Wake boats are a nuisance and a hazard. Children on the lake; those in camps, those living on the lake and those visiting are endangered by the unnecessarily large wakes. We adults who enjoy paddle boarding, kayaking and swimming have all experienced the fear when those waves come at you. I understand wanting to have fun on the lake but wake boats are not needed. As a child my parents had a camp on Joe's Pond. We water skied behind a boat with a 55 horsepower motor. You don't need a wake boat to have fun. Please keep these boats off of our lake. The regulation should NOT be changed to remove the Home Lake rule. The Home Lake rule will help to protect lakes from invasive species.

I have a camp on Lake Iroquois and the 3' and 4' wakes caused by the wake boats present a twofold problem. First, the wakes cause a great deal of erosion at the shoreline; often coming over walls and undermining them from behind. Secondly, the wakes pose a hazard to people swimming especially near the shore. This could prove deadly for young children as the wakes knock them over into the shore. They could also drown after being knocked down or knocked unconscious.

I oppose the use of wake boats severe environment impact on the shoreline

1. Increasing the required operating distance for wakeboats from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users, and
2. Increasing the minimum wake sport zone size from 50 acres to 100 acres.

After reviewing the proposal, I believe these changes are unnecessary, difficult to enforce, and unsupported by evidence demonstrating improved safety or environmental outcomes.

Proposed 500-Foot Operating Distance Requirement

The proposal would require wakeboats to maintain a 500-foot distance from all other boats, swimmers, docks, kayaks, and shorelines. Currently, wakeboats must remain 500 feet from shore and 200 feet from other users—the same standard applied to other motorized vessels.

Imposing a unique and significantly larger setback requirement for wakeboats would create confusion for operators and inconsistent rules on the water.

From a practical standpoint, estimating distance on open water is already difficult at 200 feet without specialized equipment such as radar or rangefinders. Accurately maintaining a 500-foot buffer using visual judgment alone would be unrealistic for most operators and would undermine compliance.

At distances approaching 500 feet, it becomes increasingly difficult to visually identify swimmers, buoys, or small vessels—the very hazards the rule seeks to address. This creates an unintended safety concern rather than mitigating one.

The proposed requirement places an unnecessary cognitive and operational burden on the vessel operator by requiring identification and continuous tracking of potential hazards beyond 200 feet. This expanded monitoring demand may distract operators from managing closer, time-critical interactions with the rider, thereby increasing—rather than reducing—navigational risk.

Wakeboats operating in wake sport mode typically travel at approximately 10–11 mph, substantially slower than traditional ski boats. At this speed, the existing 200-foot buffer provides sufficient time and distance for hazard recognition and avoidance.

When wakeboats are not operating in wake sport mode, they function similarly to other ski boats and should not be subject to more restrictive requirements.

Finally, the proposed distance rule could enable intentional interference with lawful wake sport activity by individuals positioning themselves within the larger buffer, effectively preventing compliant operation despite safe operation. (cont. in optional)

2. Proposed Wake Sport Zone Size Increase (50 Acres to 100 Acres) Increasing the minimum wake sport zone size from 50 acres to 100 acres would eliminate wake sport access on numerous lakes where the activity has been conducted safely for many years under the current standard. Many of these lakes have long histories of safe wake sport use under the existing 50-acre standard. These lakes have established histories of responsible wake sport use without documented safety issues that would justify doubling the acreage requirement. The proposed increase does not appear to reflect actual lake conditions, user behavior, or empirical safety data, and would unnecessarily restrict access for responsible boaters. Absent evidence that a 100-acre minimum provides demonstrable safety or environmental benefits beyond the existing 50-acre requirement, this change represents a disproportionate response that would exclude lawful recreational use

without clear justification. Wake sports are a legitimate and valued recreational activity in Vermont, supported by families and communities committed to safe and responsible boating. Vermont already maintains some of the most restrictive wake boating regulations in the country. Further limitations, without clear supporting evidence, risk reducing equitable access to public waters without delivering measurable public benefit. I respectfully request that the Department reconsider these proposed amendments and instead prioritize education, consistent enforcement of existing regulations, and continued engagement with the boating community. A data-driven and balanced regulatory approach will best serve Vermont's safety, environmental, and recreational interests. Thank you for considering this comment and for your ongoing stewardship of Vermont's waters. Respectfully submitted, Jason Heinrich

My name is Rhonda Shippee. I am President of the Seymour Lake Association. My comments are supported unanimously by our full 13-member board. We believe that several of the proposed changes significantly increase the risk of AIS spread via the water that is retained in wakeboat ballasts. Seymour and several other eligible lakes are currently AIS free.

As requested by the Agency, our comments include specific recommendations for changes that would address our concerns.

Obviously the reduction in wakesport eligible lakes from 30 to 18 will increase wakeboat traffic in the remaining 18 lakes. We do not, however, dispute the proposed elimination of some smaller lakes for safety reasons.

The UPW rule changes that went into effect in 2024 provided two protections from the spread of AIS by wakeboats.

1. First, the Home Lake Rule required wakeboats to select a single lake on which to operate during a calendar year. This would contain their ballast water to that of a single lake, and:
2. Second, certification of decontamination was required if a wakeboat wanted to travel off their home lake to another lake and return to the home lake.

Neither certification of decontamination or the Home Lake Rule were implemented by the Agency in 2024 or 2025 and 30 inland lakes in Vermont have been at risk of AIS spread from wakeboats launching on their lakes without restriction.

The proposed changes eliminate the Home Lake Rule. It was claimed to be difficult to administer. It does not have to be. Decals are not necessary. The Agency could create an on-line form for wakeboat owners to choose their home lake for the year. The Agency would issue a registration which would be kept in the watercraft along with their boat registration. Greeter programs would have access to a database of registered wakeboats for all lakes in the state. This is not a complicated issue. Our lake currently has 7 resident wakeboats. In the last two years we created our own system that is maintained at our inspection station. We have met with and educated our wakeboat owners regarding the rules of operation and they have operated respectfully. As not all wakesport eligible lakes have greeter programs, the state would have to be involved in creating the registration process. As containment is the best protection against AIS spread, our association requests that the Home Lake Rule be retained. Details of the process (such as requiring decals) do not need to be spelled out in the rule.

Decontamination is retained as a requirement in the proposed changes if a wakeboat proposes to

move between water bodies, however no certification is required. What the Agency has discovered is there currently are few to no available decontamination facilities in Vermont. They are working on a 10 year plan to rectify this that has significant costs. We cannot wait 10 years for this protection, and the state cannot afford to build a decontamination system for what is a minority number of motorboats.

Claims have been made that the washing programs of the Lake Champlain Basin Program on Lake Champlain have this capability, but it is not confirmed. Even if they are capable, they are not within a reasonable travel distance from the majority of the 18 proposed wake sport eligible lakes. Eleven of those lakes are in the Northeast Kingdom which as we all know is a long distance from Lake Champlain.

Because there are no reasonably available decontamination facilities in Vermont, we request that this component of the proposed rule be eliminated and all wakeboats be mandated to stay on their home lake for the year with no transport to other water bodies. Boats visiting from other states or Canada should be required to provide some certification of decontamination to enter one of the 18 eligible inland lakes.

We also concur with others who have testified that the 14 day quarantine period referenced in the proposed changes is not adequate. Seymour Lake and several others on the proposed wakesport eligible list currently qualify for A1 water classification. These are precious Vermont resources which deserve the highest protection possible. Zebra mussels are now nearby in Lake Memphremagog. There is NO treatment for zebra mussels and they spread rapidly. Thank you for listening. Please take seriously the risk that wakeboats present to our lakes and implement our recommendations to protect us from the AIS risks that wakeboats present.

I am a camp owner on Shadow Lake in Glover, Vt. and in favor of the new revised Public Waters as presented. I am in favor of the proposed rule change.

I acknowledge that DEC is in the difficult position of trying to please multiple parties. The department is continually asked to approve and regulate each new use and demand on the state's resources. From lampricide applications to jet skis, the department has been able to balance use vs. degradation. But there comes a time when the department should flatly deny a new demand because it is onerous in so many ways. After wake boats, what new toy will be developed for fun at the expense of the environment? Wake boats are not benign in any stretch of the imagination, and they result in ancillary damage to the environment, wildlife and the recreating public caused by a small minority who practice the activity. I am aware that DEC has no legal authority to ban wakeboats from multijurisdictional waters which provides a perfect incentive to limit their use to Lakes Champlain and Memphremagog. I acknowledge it is likely too late for this change, but please bear it in mind when the next assault on our aquatic environment is being considered. There is a limit to the abuse that any ecosystem can sustain.

Given that wake boats will be allowed on inland waterways, I offer the following comments to ameliorate their damage. Increasing the minimum size of lakes is a step in the right direction, but larger minimums would even further ameliorate the damage due to shoreline erosion and

churning up of bottom sediments. Requiring further distance from shorelines (beyond 500 ft) would reduce this impact to plants, nesting birds and other wildlife. Shallow water is also more susceptible to turbidity induced by wake boats. Establishing a minimum depth requirement of 30+ feet would lessen this impact. Lastly, wake boats have a high potential of spreading invasive aquatic plants. DEC already spends extensive time and resources on controlling Eurasian milfoil with eradication nearly impossible. The focus should therefore emphasize prevention rather than after the fact attempts at control. This could be implemented by a registration system that certifies decontamination of ballast water and tanks. Given that wake boats will be allowed on inland waterways, I offer the following comments to ameliorate their damage. Increasing the minimum size of lakes is a step in the right direction, but even large minimums would further ameliorate the damage.

Wakesports I am opposed to the use of wakeboats on Holland Pond. The pond is too shallow for their use, and would disrupt the fishery. There are loons nesting on the pond as well. The pond is also too narrow for these type of boats, they would destroy an already fragile coastline, and would possibly upset the many under-engineered docks that were designed for a more placid surface. There are many canoes and kayaks on the pond during open water, people who seek refuge from larger lakes with large boats already.

ellen.langtree@gmail.com

Wake boats have no place in any lakes! they are only appropriate in the oceans. These boats damage the delicate shore line ecology. they swamp small boats and are harmful to swimmers, both human as well as wildlife. Wake boats should be banned. wake boats damage shore habitat, disrupt wildlife, are harmful to swimmers, to small boat users. they'er water filled inside(for their weight) can spread invasive plants & marine life.

I understand there is an ongoing DEC rulemaking process to make significant changes to rules regulating wake sports on Vermont's inland lakes. Unfortunately, I work far too many hours and have other volunteer demands that do not allow me to keep up with this process. However, I have learned enough that I can support the new proposed rules. It is good the new rules propose increasing the size of the wake sports zone - making smaller lakes safe, and increase the distance wake boats in large wake mode must stay from shore and others on the water. It is unfortunate that Lake Willoughby is not included - in order to make it more safe! That is the one Lake. I was concerned about as I spend my time there kayaking. It's also unfortunate that many of us that want to enjoy the inland lakes, free from wake boats, cannot be fully represented. - as I am confident the wake boat manufacturer's can afford to. Please please protect our lakes from the few damaging wake boats so that many more can SAFELY enjoy the inland's lakes and protect them from damage and invasive species that remain in their ballasts. I wish O could make the in person meetings or online but UVMCM schedules employees such as myself for 12 hour shifts. It complicates attendance. I'm heartbroken as a native Vermonter - multigenerational including Native American roots - that this has become necessary to have to resort to this process. Our lakes are critical to our tourism income to keep VT pristine and protected from a few that want these large boats. Keep them relegated to large lakes like Lake Champlain if they must be allowed. But Lake Willoughby has somehow escaped the ravages of invasive species like Lake Champlain. PLEASE HELP.

WAKESPORTS PHYSICS AND WAVE DYNAMICS

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Wakesports

February 3, 2026

Dear Vermont Wakesports environment guardians,

I am a recently-retired University Physics professor, and I am pleased to see scientifically-backed considerations applied in serious decision making – especially decision making that impacts water safety and environmental preservation. Very serious to all Vermonters is the determining of safe & sustainable management rules for keeping wake boat use well back from the shorelines and the shallows of Vermont’s glacially carved small lakes.

Some studies suggest that the wake-boat created waves stay far enough from shorelines to never exceed the shore-washing wave height of the highest wind-blown waves measured on the lake. That is a good place to start, but it ignores the fact that wind-blown waves generally maximize only for a small section of lake at the end of a large fetch (the distance of water the wind blows over) and then only for the times when the prevailing wind direction lines up with the long fetch. Conversely, wake boats create waves in every direction and wash away banks and nesting areas for shorebirds (e.g., loons), mammals and even fish and fish eggs. Many native fish create circular nests on lake bottom shallows where they lay eggs and guard them. Those nests are displaced by wake boats. Sadly, attempts by landowners to preserve banks & coves from wake-boat wave onslaught by adding rock and other barriers have not been effective (and may even further damage the ecology of the lake.)

In addition to the many obvious safety issues before us with large enhanced wake boat waves, we should also consider how wake boat waves differ from wind-blown waves, and how the adverse effects become pronounced in steep rising shorelines of glacially carved small lakes. Vermont lakeshores are physically very different from the gradually-sloping shores found in Florida, for example.

Waves on Vermont lakes will encounter steeply rising floors (sometimes cliff-like, e.g., Willoughby Lake) and must therefore react much more suddenly & significantly to maintain total wave energy when impacting on quick rising shores. Unfortunately, this issue was not addressed in the 2024 rules nor is it addressed in the rules currently under consideration.

Wave energy drives a process called shoaling as the bottoms of waves encounter a rising lake floor. Interaction with the floor both slows the bottom of the wave and shortens its wavelength. The physics relationship of speed, wavelength, and amplitude requires that total wave energy stay unchanged – and the incoming wave maintains this by sharply raising its amplitude (its height).

Let us consider what happens – and how forcefully – as strong waves hit the sudden inflections of Vermont lake beds. Damaging waves reach way up onto shore and wash shoreline back into the lake. High waves also stir away the egg-laying and fertilizing circles which lake fish prepare near shorelines. Similarly, quick rising waves destroy loon nests, typically located only 2 to 8 inches above the waterline. etc. The rare and precious ecology of our lakes is defenseless against such onslaught.

Human safety is also threatened when waves rise suddenly. Along the shore is where small children swim and most kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, etc. takes place.

Energy does not go away but it does convert to work. The “work” of high amplitude waves is often extremely damaging. Consider the “work” of a tsunami.

A tsunami, of course, is not created by wind blowing over a fetch. Its source of energy lies deep underwater. Wake boats also create deep-water effects.

****continued in (4) below** Wake boats inject high speed jets of water deep into lakes and some of this energy certainly rises immediately to create “surf” behind the boat. However, other wake-boat-generated energy becomes longitudinal (in the deep water) and transverse (at the air-**

water interface) to radiate toward shorelines. Deep under-surface longitudinal energy transmission is very powerful, as submarine captains who have encountered depth charges will attest. Waves from wake-boats are more powerful than those from ordinary boats because of the combined longitudinal and transverse nature of downward jet injection of energy. Deep water energy also must strongly and suddenly move up to a high-amplitude wave when meeting a steep lake-bed rise. And, children at play cannot even see that energy coming in to avoid it... The incredible wave energy of wake boats increases each year with new wave making designs that exceed all previous ones. Waves from multiple wake-boats operating simultaneously do add and subtract from each other as they criss-cross. Where they add to each other, large waves may erupt even away from the shore. In coves, waves may bounce off circular shores to add together near the cove-center loon nests. In contrast, windblown waves tend to build in only one or two directions on a lake. Their maximum lake-bottom impacts do cause scouring and dangerous jostling of boats, docks, and people. But wake boats easily cause much more damage, in more unexpected ways, and in more unexpected places around a small Vermont lake. The Science warns us. The size and structure of our unique Vermont lakes make them very susceptible to serious damage from wake-boat induced wave energy. Based on the best available science included in RWVL's March 2022 ANR wakesports petition, please restrict wake boat use to a minimum 1000 feet from our near-shore precious lives, ecosystems and activities. Philip F. Logsdon, Physics Professor, who has delighted in the Lake Sunset ecosystem with family and friends for over 50 years at 466 Hyatt Camp Road, Benson VT. Phil.logsdon@gmail.com 617.794.9378 (m) p.s Sunset Lake is a major scuba training site for the Waterfront Diving Center which certifies many VT State police officers there every year. They choose this lake because water clarity extends very deep. Wake-boats would obviously change this clarity – but a further and much more critical concern would be deep water jets hitting and tumbling student divers unprepared for such a powerful underwater jostling. BTW, anglers know that fish cross lakes repeatedly on natural “highways” between resting & feeding sites. Wake-boat water jets hitting those underwater paths will forcefully tumble every fish enroute...

With a 1,000-foot minimum distance, fewer lakes, like Shadow Lake in Glover Vermont, would be eligible for wake boat activities, thus exposing fewer lakes to the dangers created by wake boats.

With a 1,000-foot minimum distance, traditional users and wake boats would more safely share the remaining larger lakes with wake sports zones. Accepting that waves generated by today's ballasted wake boats dissipate to an acceptable level over a 500-foot distance, there would be an additional 500-foot “safety zone” providing greater relative safety to skiers, paddlers, rowers, small sailboats, anglers, and swimmers. Have you been to Shadow Lake in Glover Vermont? It is a treasure. Beautiful. A rare beautiful gem. Please put in place the 1,000 foot minimum distance for all wake boats. Please keep it that way. Also plan for the future and embrace changes to keep Shadow Lake protected. This is the real way to insure that Shadow Lake in Glover Vermont will have a future of sustainable beauty, and healthy water.

I oppose the potential new regulations as there has been no evidence that shows that the current regulations are not working and need to be strengthened. Yes

I reside in Derby and share a Willoughby camp. As a current Rutgers PhD student in Earth, Planetary, Marine, and Coastal Sciences, I am concerned about the impact of the waves produced by wake boats, waves big enough to surf on and with the capacity to erode lake shorelines and disturb the lake for other recreational users. I support measures that keep wake boat's unnatural waves far from shorelines and from wildlife. I support the changes proposed in June, 2025. I am also concerned about the wake boats carrying and spreading invasive species in their ballast tanks.

I fully support the changes in wake board restrictions. As a regular swimmer in Lake Iroquios, I can attest that the current restrictions do not go far enough. The lake is simply too small to accommodate this type of boat. I am careful and pay attention; I pull a float. I have been swamped a number of times, seen windsurfers swamped and watched kids in the lake for fear they would get unexpectedly swamped. Boaters just can not meet the distance restrictions and are always too close to others in the water. Regarding invasive species, these boats pose a high risk of contamination-we do not have zebras (yet); the required cleaning of the ballast tanks is essential. As a VT resident for almost 40 years and visitor of many lakes I strongly support this rule so everyone can enjoy the lake. I strongly support this rule, lakes are a great public resource and use of these boats impairs others enjoyment and places the lake at risk for invasive species. Because wake boats are constantly filling and emptying their tanks, there is the danger that when they move from lake to lake, they will transport species like the snails that are invasive, causing permanent danger. It would be like having a party at your house and inviting people you know have been exposed to air-born diseases. You would not do it. You would not welcome anything that could endanger your environment. **WAKE BOATS SIMPLY SHOULD NOT BE IN THE LAKES OF NEW ENGLAND.**

The argument that the wake sport industry is good for Vermont only works until you balance in the consequence of the damage they could do to Vermont's lakes. If the lakes are destroyed, which is a possibility, it would be very bad for Vermont financially. So in the long run, Vermont's economy would be better off without wake boats destroying our lakes.

Question 5 is confusing. There have been many changes to the water craft rules, so it is impossible for me to answer the questions other than to say I oppose the use of wake sport boats on Willoughby Lake in Westmore, VT (and all New England lakes).

I'm Sarah Page and a summer resident of Westmore so I will speak for (and to) Lake Willoughby although want to protect all our waterways and those that use them. It is the state's JOB is to protect the health of our lakes and preserve their beauty so that we may enjoy using them going forward. The spread of aquatic invasives happens easily and quickly: only small particles are necessary to infect a clean lake so it makes no sense to eliminate Home Lake Rule. Home Lake Rule should remain and it's enforcement strengthened. If, as you state, that it's impossible to track all wakeboats using out public waters then they should be prohibited because enforcement of the rules is impossible. Wakeboats should only operate where there are disinfection facilities available and an enforceable certification process in place. It is environmentally and fiscally irresponsible to allow otherwise. If Willoughby Lake is infected, the cost to clean -if even possible- will be prohibitively expensive. Since the state tells us there isn't the money for these facilities wakeboats should be prohibited until the state- or even the wakeboat owners- can pay for them- up front. There seems to be a well organized group that presents at these forums- including wakeboat retailers- and they apparently have money to spend on luxuries so make them pay for the facility that only they use. Vehicles operating on Vermont roads can be identified and held to our rules of the road. We must have an enforceable certification system so that our volunteer greeters on Lake Willoughby don't have to be the arbitor of whether a boat may enter the lake. Proof of disinfection at the lake they will be entering should be shown before they

launch. As it stands now, calling on the Marine Division of State Police or game wardens who are spread too thinly to respond quickly enough to prevent those that feel entitled to break the rules doesn't work. Greeters deal with belligerence and outright defiance so clearly there is not sufficient oversight. I was frankly astounded that the state removed the decontamination requirement simply because they couldn't afford it. Invasive species clean will be more expensive than prevention strategies and if you think otherwise, then prohibit these boats altogether.

My second concern is safety. In an analysis by St. Anthony Falls Laboratory, wakeboat wave energy equals that of a ski boat ONLY after traveling more than about 600 feet—well beyond the proposed 500-foot buffer. The regulations need to be strengthened to reflect this. As for enforcement of this on Willoughby where I have no cell service, I would have no way to call if a wakeboat is a problem or danger.

Finally, I've listened to too many of the wakeboat supporters read from the same playbook.

Most common is: "there have been few or no reports of problems". To them and the state, I'd point out that the reporting system isn't functional. If people don't know how to report and if there's no cell service, how can people report? Just because we can't get their registration number or call to report doesn't mean there isn't a problem, as many swimmers, boaters and paddleboarders have attested in sometimes terrifying detail.

What is the process for reporting?

When do we get adequate cell service to call for help?

To the "we should collect data before limiting wakeboats" the state needs to tell them that studies elsewhere (was it Minnesota? Michigan?) apply. Water is water, for heaven's sake. As was aptly put yesterday by a physicist, the physics of water don't change from state to state. Waiting to collect data increases chance of invasive contamination. Never mind you folks having to explain the failure of these regulations; the bigger problem will be "what now???" and "How much will it cost??"

To the "education will take care of safety risk and other boaters are a threat, too" argument I have only to say that bigger waves means bigger threat. This is not our usual and customary This is not our usual and customary wave so a statement identifying the purpose of ballast is to create a surfing wave that is outside the norm should be included so that we don't have to listen to this argument anymore. To the "fishing boats are a threat for spread of invasives, too" please state that cleaning out the smaller bilges is at least possible without a decontamination facility while wakeboat bilge cleaning is not. I read the evidence on this somewhere. Do I need to find it? To the question of equity- that public water is everyone's right : well, do I get to throw contaminants into our lakes? Contamination is not a right. There is a fine for dumping anything that harms our public recreation water and land. Fines reflect the cost for clean up. What if there is no possibility of complete clean up as is the case with some of these invasives? The answer should be that our state has and uses the maximum resource to prevent it in the first place. This is no place to cut corners. To wakeboat owners and operators: if you claim to love our lakes , that you are responsible stewards of our public waters and resent the pushback to your presence on the water then put your energy into doing everything to ensure health and safety rather than insisting on you entitlement at the expense of everyone else. Sarah Page Brattleboro and Westmore, VT

First of all, I want to thank everyone at the ANR and the DEC for all the work you do on behalf of our brave little state.

As an owner of a camp on Woodbury Lake in central Vermont for the past 42 years, I've been an avid open water swimmer; I also swim at Shadow (Glover) and Parker Pond (West Glover). I strongly recommend the DEC adopt its proposed rule changes:

- Prohibit wake sports on up to 13 of the 30 lakes that currently allow wake sports**
- Increase minimum wake sports safety zone (WSZ) from 50 to 100 acres**
- Require a minimum wake sports run of 3,000 feet**
- Expand the safety buffer from other users and structures from 200 to 500 feet**

Why? These changes are reasonable and fair to all parties concerned, including wake boat owners. The lakes that will prohibit wake boats in DEC's proposal are just too small to currently accommodate these vessels that are growing larger and larger every year. The wake boats minimum safety zone of 100 acres significantly addresses swimming and boating safety. A minimum wake sports run of 3,000 feet allows for a wake boater to have more leeway and wiggle room to conform to the regulations. Expanding the safety buffer from other users and structures to 500 feet also increases safety for vulnerable lake users as well as protecting loon nests and reducing shore erosion.

As a swimmer, I'm alarmed by a wake boat driver's limited vision due to the heavy ballast lifting the bow. I'm wary of getting swamped by an unnatural wave that I cannot anticipate. The churning of lake bottoms by the ever increasingly large boats also threatens the health of these lakes. The spread of AIS will be an ongoing issue as well.

I urge you to adopt the proposed rule changes in the interest of all recreational users of the states' bodies of water. Thank you for listening.

Having carefully considered the DEC proposed rule changes, I find myself in agreement with the additional changes proposed by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes (RWVL): -Increase the minimum required water depth from 20 to 30 feet to reduce agitation of lake bottoms -Increase setback distances from structures, lake users, shorelines, and loon nests from 500 to 700 feet - Add a clear statement in the UPW rules that wake sports are not a traditional use of public waters and thus require these additional rule changes -Add "Precautionary Principle" language in the UPW rules to put safety and environmental protection as the highest priority. Is it fair to the vast majority of recreational lake users to be subjected to the dominance of a tiny minority who pose a significant threat to the health of said users as well as the health of the lakes? Are the fair and reasonable changes to keep swimmers safe only going to be enacted when someone is maimed or killed by one of these boats? Why wait until then? Again, I respectfully urge you to adopt the DEC proposals and the RWVL's additional proposals, and I thank you for listening.

Wake boats should not be allowed at any Vt lakes with the exception of Champlain and Mephremagog. All of our other lakes are too small and fragile. Our lake waters are challenged enough with cyanobacteria, invasive plants and general water quality degregation. Our water bodies need to be protected for all users not just a token few with such dangerous boats. Please don't allow wake boats our our lakes and ponds. My small home lake, Joe's pond has several of them and they keep me from using my kayak safely. We now have milfoil choking our waters. Please protect our waters

Dear ANR / Lakes & Ponds,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment regarding the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments.

I respectfully submit this letter to outline my opposition to three proposed additions — the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement,

- the “500 feet from any object” provision within a wakesports zone,
 - and the increase in minimum lake size from 50 acres to 100 acres —
 - and to address the related argument that wakesports constitute a “non-normal use” of Vermont public waters.
- Section 3.7 and 4.3 Rule Changes

1) Opposition to a 3,000-Foot Straight-Run Requirement

There is no peer-reviewed environmental or boating-safety research establishing 3,000 feet as a required minimum run length for safe wakesurf operation. The wake studies most often cited address wake characteristics, wave attenuation, and potential environmental effects. They do not prescribe a minimum straight-run distance.

The 3,000-foot number appears primarily as an operational description of a typical ride length and as an assumption used in geometric modeling of space. This reflects boating practice and zoning math, not measured hydrodynamic necessity.

Conclusion: Because no scientific or environmental study establishes a need for a 3,000-foot straight run, this is a policy choice. It should not be characterized as science-based without a peer-reviewed study demonstrating necessity.

2) Opposition to “500 Feet From Any Object” Within the Wakesports Zone

Vermont already operates under a statewide boating safety structure built around a 200-foot framework related to swimmers, shorelines, and other vessels. Major wakesurf research discussions focus on wake energy and wave attenuation, not on collision envelopes or separation bubbles from “any object.”

For example, work from the University of Minnesota and St. Anthony Falls Laboratory examines distances needed for wake characteristics to diminish. That is a wake-behavior question, not proof that 500 feet from all objects is required for safe operation.

Requiring 500 feet from shore and 500 feet from other vessels or swimmers creates a large moving exclusion zone. In normal lake use, this can make compliance impractical, converting theoretical allowance into practical prohibition.

Conclusion: Without a boating-safety or collision-risk study supporting 500 feet from other vessels or swimmers, this reads as a policy restriction rather than a science-based safety threshold.

3) Opposition to Increasing Minimum Zone Size from 50 Acres to 100 Acres

Acreage is not a direct scientific variable. Area thresholds are derived from assumed run length, wake width, and setbacks — geometry, not hydrodynamics.

Vermont’s current rule already requires at least 50 acres, along with shoreline setbacks and depth requirements. Increasing to 100 acres will remove additional waterbodies by definition. That is a policy outcome and should be acknowledged as such.

Conclusion: Absent a study showing that 50 acres with existing safeguards is insufficient and 100 acres is necessary, this change functions as a policy lever to restrict access.

Section 3.7 and 4.3

Overall Scientific Context

Vermont's existing wakesports zone definition is already restrictive and codified. The broader research landscape on wake attenuation is mixed and condition-dependent. Vermont has not produced Vermont-specific hydrodynamic field research in this record demonstrating that the escalated numerical thresholds are necessary statewide.

Final Conclusion

See next box Final Conclusion I oppose the additional restrictions because: 1. 3,000 feet is not shown to be required by scientific research; it is an operational assumption. 2. 500 feet from any object is not supported by wake attenuation science and functions as a practical access restriction. 3. 100 acres is a policy exclusion tool, not a measured environmental threshold. 4. Wakesurfing represents an evolution of long-standing towed watersports and falls within Vermont's normal use framework. Taken together, these proposals read as policy mechanisms to further restrict use in the absence of Vermont-specific scientific findings. Thank you for considering this comment.

The proposed changes are helpful because of the substantial impact wake surfing imposes on all other public users. This is especially true in small lakes. Thus the expanded safety area required for wakesports and wake surfing is reasonable. Responsible proponents of this sport recognize the dangers involved in their sport and the exclusionary impact that wake surfing has on nearby swimmers, paddlers, anglers, and sailors.

The increased scrutiny across the country of the effects of 600+ hp engines powering 10,000 pounds of displacement to slowly and relentlessly push water and create 3 - 4 foot waves has documented the need to limit wake surfing to only the largest and deepest lakes. This is step one in a reasoned management for this activity. The required distance from shorelines and from lake bottoms, to minimize bottom scouring, is helpful in limiting the eutrophication of lakes. These limits, however, do not address the multitude of other users and their safety.

Thank you for addressing safety and allowing the vast majority of public users to continue to use Vermont's lakes and ponds in safety. I apologize if this is a repeated entry. It was uncertain to me if the comment had been posted.

Wake boats should only be allowed on large body of water! Lake Champlain or Minpimagod in Vt. These boats are an environmental hazard!! on small bodies of water

We do not want to allow wakeboat sports on Lake Fairlee due to our concern for the safety of all the campers and others who go on the lake to sail, canoe, kayak, and use paddleboards as well as our belief that the huge waves cause damage to the fragile shorelines. Wakeboat sports should take place in much larger lakes than Lake Fairlee.

Public Safety: Massive wake waves can suddenly overwhelm swimmers, children, and other boaters.

Infrastructure Gaps: The DEC plans to replace the “Home Lake Rule” with hot water decontamination but lacks the necessary funding and timeline to build the required decon stations.

Environmental Damage: High-impact wakes erode shorelines and destroy loon nests. Residual water in ballast tanks can spread invasive species.

Limited Visibility: Heavy aft ballast weight lifts the boat’s bow, significantly impairing the driver’s view of others on the water. Wake boats are designed to disrupt the water. Manufacturers proudly state each model is bigger and heavier than existing models. These machines simply are not appropriate for inland waters.

Connie Jackson, Secretary, Averill Lakes Association (since 2018); LaRosa volunteer Little Averill sampler (since 2023). I am opposed to the revised rule changes because they eliminate the Home Lake Rule and proof of decontamination, two of the few tools we have to protect our pristine lakes.

A growing threat to the spread of AIS is through watercraft that have ballast water that cannot be fully drained. Both Great and Little Averill are AIS free. There are no decontamination stations closer than a 3-hour drive. Before eliminating two necessary protections, we need a local hot-water decontamination station, funding and full-time staffing for that AND our Greeter program. ALA has limited funding and a small labor pool for our greeter program. The state reimburses a small percentage of that cost. We receive NO monetary support from any municipality, so cost overruns fall on ALA.

ALA has been working diligently, putting in hundreds dollars and volunteer hours: 1. Organizing and running TWO part-time greeter programs. 2. Water testing on both Great and Little Averill plus monitoring the inlets; assisting with state deployment of monitoring equipment in Little Averill. 3. Encouraging landowners to apply for Lake Wise awards (Little Averill received Gold Lake Wise designation last year - Great Averill is now qualified). 4. Seeking and winning approval for a Lake Watershed Action Plan, now in progress...hosting meetings and promoting the LWAP to all stakeholders in our watershed.

And for what? If the state implements the revised wake sports rules, both Great and Little Averill will be 2 of only 18 inland lakes in Vermont that will qualify for wake sports. The private launch owner on Little Averill has banned wake boats from this launch, but no one at DEC seems willing to publish a note on the state’s website detailing this prohibition. This is an open invitation to introduce AIS, erode shorelines and disturb the primary users (families with small children, fishermen, kayakers, sailors, swimmers and loons). Some of Vermont’s lakes (about 24, including Great and Little Averill), are classified as oligotrophic and are called “pristine” because of their clean, clear water and deep basins. These lakes are rare across the US and in Vermont. Isn’t the ANR tasked with protecting Vermont’s pristine or special waters?

I strongly support a pause on wake boats from away coming to these lakes until the necessary infrastructure is in place to clean these boat ballasts.

I DO support the increased safety buffers, but they do not go far enough.

We've already made significant sacrifices to help protect our Vermont waters by strictly following the 500-yard rule and operating well offshore. Now you're proposing to completely eliminate wake surfing, despite the efforts and investments we've made to comply with existing regulations.

We are fully invested boat owners, and our livelihoods are rooted here in Vermont. We live here, work here, and raise our families here. We care deeply about protecting our Green Mountain State waters because they are part of our home, our economy, and our way of life. We have willingly adapted to new rules in order to balance recreation with environmental stewardship.

Wake surfers operating 500 yards from shore are in deep water, away from sensitive shoreline habitats, docks, and erosion-prone areas. This rule was designed specifically to mitigate shoreline impact, and we have complied with it. Eliminating the activity entirely disregards the compromises already made and the responsible practices many of us follow.

It's also important to recognize that other boating activities can impact the ecosystem as well. For example, bass boats often operate in very shallow waters where trolling motors extend 12 to 18 inches below the surface. In these areas, propellers can disturb sediment, uproot plant life, and disrupt the delicate ecosystem on the lake bottom. Any activity in shallow water carries environmental considerations.

We believe in science-based, balanced policy decisions that consider all users of Vermont's lakes. Rather than imposing a complete ban, a fair approach would continue to enforce reasonable setbacks, depth requirements, and responsible operation standards. Wake surfing families and businesses deserve to be part of that conversation.

We are not asking to ignore environmental concerns. We are asking for fairness, consistency, and acknowledgment of the steps we've already taken to protect Vermont's waters. Read above, thank you.

As a resident of Thetford for over 40 years, I use the Lake Fairlee frequently to kayak, paddle board, swim, fish and view wildlife. I have noticed with pleasure, over the last several years a sharp increase of those who have taken to the Lake to enjoy non motorized recreational activities.

The lake is enjoyed by many visitors, residents and summer campers. My 3 children have taken swim lessons and spent time attending summer camps on this lake. I now take my 5 yo granddaughter to Treasure Island on Lake Fairlee hoping to give and share with her all that this beautiful lake provides.

I have many concerns about the use of Wakesport boats on this beloved lake.

First and foremost the safety of those who use the lake to swim and kayak.

I have been on Lake Fairlee at times where I have needed to use extreme caution when just typical motor boats have caused my kayak or paddle board to become unstable and possibly cause me to come close to capsizing. I can't imagine a Wakesport Boats not increasing this probability.

I also swim off my kayak and paddle board where milfoil, another concern, is not too rampant. It is my understanding, that Wakesport Boats have more potential to cause a spread of this invasive species if the ballast tanks are not emptied in the proper manner.

Lastly, I am concerned about the safety compromise of poor visibility from these Wakesport Boats because of the heavy ballast weight that causes the bow to ride higher up and to impair the drivers view of other lake users leading to serious safety concerns.

I would like to see a policy that doesn't pose a threat to the safety of those who enjoy the use of

Lake Fairlee without causing safety and the potential environmental impact that Wakesport Boats do.

I support the complete ban of wakesports on all public lakes in Vermont. My biggest concern is for "normal users" based on public safety, because I do not think Vermont is prepared to police any regulations, nor do I think we have nearly adequate presence of public safety personnel on these lakes to ensure that endangered or injured boaters can obtain assistance. My second big concern is invasive species. We have been fighting milfoil at Lake Willoughby for at least 30 years. We will not successfully combat another invasive species and our lake will succumb to any new invasive species it is exposed to as a result of contaminated wakeboat ballast water. See my email, sent on today's date.

It's simple clean water supports life. The number of boats by day/season and type of boats should be limited and closely inspected at the launch to protect the body of water, therefore prolonging its lifespan as a clean finite resource. Safety zones for swimmers and small boat access points should also be maintained and respected, potentially extending the depth for safer passage of small vessels and open water swimmers. For example I do not support having 10 or more boats with mid range engines or larger on any freshwater lakes. In conclusion anything that can contaminate or disrupt the waters bottom sediments with increased turbidity needs to be kept away from the shorelines and limited by inspection as well as have capped admissions by day/season. Thank you for your time and consideration

There enough lakes in the NEK that have NOT submitted petitions to ban WAKE boats that the demand can be met with those lakes leaving the lakes where petitions have been submitted to be wake boat free. Furthermore allowing and encouraging boats to go from large invasive infested lake to lakes that are not yet contaminated will no doubt degrade them more quickly. Please keep wake boats off willoughby. Let them boat on lakes like Champlain or Memphremagog that are already degraded. Listen to to people who live on the lakes, swim in the lakes and fish. Don't let wake boats wreck it for everyone else

I think wakesports should not be allowed on any of Vermont's smaller lakes and ponds. Champlain and perhaps Memphremagog, but no others. I also think boat was station should be available at every state fishing access, no matter what size the lake or pond.

In spite of the courteous wakeboat users on Lake Iroquois, I have been knocked off my paddleboard by their waves, and have had a worrisome experience when waves from a wakeboat washed my young grandchild under a dock and he couldn't get out without help. Our entire family also avoids using the lake by canoe or other small craft when the boats are in use.

My wife and I have devoted many hours since the 1990's battling EWM on Lake Iroquois, and as Vermont Invasive Patrollers. Anything that can be done to limit introduction of other invasives should be undertaken throughout the State. This should include the "home rule" for wakeboats.

Please carefully examine new scientific data, and anticipate what might occur as these boats become more popular, and likely generate larger wakes and bottom disturbance, et.

I summer in Vermont every year on Shadow Lake where I swim and kayak every day I am there. Allowing wake boats on small lakes like this one in Glover, would be a crime and end one of the most enjoyable times of year myself, friends and family look forward to. I really do not understand why this is even being considered. The small lakes in Vermont are already under enough stress. Please do not allow something that will endanger and restrict the freedom of all of us who enjoy the ability to swim and boat in these magnificent state treasures. Michael Romanyshyn

Do you have access to a lake that allows WAKE BOATS. I do, I live on Harvey Lake. When these WAKE BOATS are active, get off the lake and succor what you have on the water. The waves are going to kill you. What happened to the Shore Line Protection Act. Get your shit together and ban these WAKE BOATS, from any VT water. Please BAN ALL WAKE BOATS ON VT WATER.

I support the new legislation to further increase limits on wakeboarding on VT lakes. In fact I think they should be banned completely. I own waterfront on Lake Morey and have many first hand negative experiences with wakeboard. They are louder than everyone else. They create a definite danger to the other boaters and to the wildlife. Also, I can sit on my dock and watch the shoreline erode from the crashing of their wakes. There is no reason why a few recreationalists should be allowed to have such a negative impact on a common body of water.

I support the amendments made by the Department of Environmental Conservation to the proposed Use of Public Waters Rule that was passed two years ago, that would make it stronger and add another 13 lakes (which includes the Waterbury Reservoir) to the list of lakes where wake sports is prohibited. To indulge a few extremely wealthy wakesport fanatics, the lakes will no longer be safe for swimmers, rowers, boaters of any kind, including paddleboarders. Wildlife will be severely affected, some species may not survive.

Dear ANR / Lakes & Ponds,

My name is Anna-Marie Groskritz and I live on Lake Bomoseen in Castleton Vermont. Wake surfing is something I, and so many others look forward to every summer. Taking this away would be heartbreaking to so many.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment regarding the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments.

I respectfully submit this letter to outline my opposition to three proposed additions — the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement,

- the “500 feet from any object” provision within a wakesports zone,

- and the increase in minimum lake size from 50 acres to 100 acres —
- and to address the related argument that wakesports constitute a “non-normal use” of Vermont public waters.
- Section 3.7 and 4.3 Rule Changes

1) Opposition to a 3,000-Foot Straight-Run Requirement

There is no peer-reviewed environmental or boating-safety research establishing 3,000 feet as a required minimum run length for safe wakesurf operation. The wake studies most often cited address wake characteristics, wave attenuation, and potential environmental effects. They do not prescribe a minimum straight-run distance. The 3,000-foot number appears primarily as an operational description of a typical ride length and as an assumption used in geometric modeling of space. This reflects boating practice and zoning math, not measured hydrodynamic necessity.

Conclusion: Because no scientific or environmental study establishes a need for a 3,000-foot straight run, this is a policy choice. It should not be characterized as science-based without a peer-reviewed study demonstrating necessity.

2) Opposition to “500 Feet From Any Object” Within the Wakesports Zone

Vermont already operates under a statewide boating safety structure built around a 200-foot framework related to swimmers, shorelines, and other vessels. Major wakesurf research discussions focus on wake energy and wave attenuation, not on collision envelopes or separation bubbles from “any object.”

For example, work from the University of Minnesota and St. Anthony Falls Laboratory examines distances needed for wake characteristics to diminish. That is a wake-behavior question, not proof that 500 feet from all objects is required for safe operation. Requiring 500 feet from shore and 500 feet from other vessels or swimmers creates a large moving exclusion zone. In normal lake use, this can make compliance impractical, converting theoretical allowance into practical prohibition.

Conclusion: Without a boating-safety or collision-risk study supporting 500 feet from other vessels or swimmers, this reads as a policy restriction rather than a science-based safety threshold.

3) Opposition to Increasing Minimum Zone Size from 50 Acres to 100 Acres

Acreage is not a direct scientific variable. Area thresholds are derived from assumed run length, wake width, and setbacks — geometry, not hydrodynamics.

Vermont’s current rule already requires at least 50 acres, along with shoreline setbacks and depth requirements. Increasing to 100 acres will remove additional waterbodies by definition. That is a policy outcome and should be acknowledged as such.

Conclusion: Absent a study showing that 50 acres with existing safeguards is insufficient and 100 acres is necessary, this change functions as a policy lever to restrict access.

Section 3.7 and 4.3

Overall Scientific Context

Vermont’s existing wakesports zone definition is already restrictive and codified. The broader research landscape on wake attenuation is mixed and condition-dependent. Vermont has not produced Vermont-specific hydrodynamic field research in this record demonstrating that the escalated numerical thresholds are necessary statewide.

Final Conclusion

I oppose the additional restrictions because:

1. 3,000 feet is not shown to be required by scientific research; it is an operational assumption.
2. 3. 4. 500 feet from any object is not supported by wake attenuation science and

functions as a practical access restriction 3. 4. 500 feet from any object is not supported by wake attenuation science and functions as a practical access restriction. 100 acres is a policy exclusion tool, not a measured environmental threshold. Wakesurfing represents an evolution of long-standing towed watersports and falls within Vermont's normal use framework. Taken together, these proposals read as policy mechanisms to further restrict use in the absence of Vermont-specific scientific findings. Thank you for considering this comment. Scientific References University of Minnesota — St. Anthony Falls Laboratory Research on wake wave characteristics, energy, and attenuation relative to distance and depth <https://cse.umn.edu/safl/news/umn-researchers-study-waves-created-recreational-boats> Marr et al., Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves (2022) Wave height, energy, and attenuation study https://coalitionnavigation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/BoatGeneratedWakeWaveReport_Feb12022_Final.pdf Lake Waramaug Task Force — Shallow Water Environment Wave Impact Study (2024) Wave energy propagation and shoreline distance findings <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852df852e69cfa768783fd0/t/6791117b64c0e95b7061fb1b/1737560444987/LWTaskForce%2BShallow%2BWater%2BEnvironment%2BWave%2BImpact%2BStudy%2BFinal%2BReport%2B010825.pdf> Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings <https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf> Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015) Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025) MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf> ** please note the university of Minnesota and Marr Et Al were presented and referenced through public comments and petitions by those requesting additional restrictions

Please add Harvey Lake to the list of “NO WAKEBOARDS ALLOWED” for the health and safety of lake residents and their shorelines. We've seen erosion on our shores and docks disrupted causing boat damage.

I am writing as a resident of West Barnet and a member of both the Lake Harvey Association and the Harvey's Lake Beach committee. Here is why I am opposed to allowing wakeboarding on Harvey's Lake. I

- A wake boat typically travels about 3,000 feet in a straight line, and its wake affects at least 500 feet on either side, creating a functional impact/disturbance area roughly 1,000 feet wide and 3000 feet long.
- This footprint makes it extremely difficult for other users—especially swimmers, paddlers, sailors, and other non-motorized vessels—to safely avoid the wake.
- On wakesports zones smaller than 100 +/- acres, a single wake boat dominates the entire area, effectively turning what is normally a shared zone into an exclusion zone.
- As zone size increases beyond that 100 or so acres, users have a greater opportunity to spread out; safety is increased, and conflicts may decline.

- For Lake Harvey residents and visitors, this is about equitably ensuring the safety, access, and preservation of our waters, shorelines, property and lifestyle.

Lake Harvey, with its designated 116 acre zone, is still on the wakesport eligible list. However, the configuration of our lake – narrow at both north and south ends, home to the public beach, the Fish & Wildlife boat access with its extended pier and ongoing launching and retrieving of visiting boats, nesting loons at both ends, and so very many resident boat and swim docks – illustrates an environment clearly adverse to wakesport activities. As shown below, the dark rectangle where wakeboats would operate (known as the “area of disturbance”) is not fully within the 500 feet from shore wakesport zone and does not fit the DEC proposed parameters. Wakesports are not a normal, appropriate, safe or equitable activity on our lake. Remember, just one wake boat in wakesports mode creates a multitude of safety hazards to normal motorized and non-motorized boaters and swimmers attempting to enjoy their traditional lake experience without anxiety and concern. Please remove Lake Harvey from the list of lakes eligible for wakesports. Thank you.

I have rented a house on Harvey Lake every summer for the past six years. I absolutely love the quiet and serene environment there. However, I have often seen motorboats traveling fast close to shore where people are swimming, and the boats don't seem aware about the potential danger to swimmers. This is partly because of the shape and size of the lake. It is not really big enough to support motorsports, and the irregular shape of the lake means that boats come very close to the northern shore when cutting across from the eastern side of the lake to the western Bay (where the public beach is). Lake Harvey should be added to the list of lakes exempt from wakesports.

My family and I have visited Lake Fairlee for eight summers. We return often because of its serenity, its clean water, and the confidence it gives our son and his friend(s) to explore independently. It is where our son learned to kayak and gradually paddled farther on his own. That independence is possible because Lake Fairlee has long been a calm-water lake. The introduction of wake boats would fundamentally change that safety.

Lake Fairlee is approximately 90 acres. Wake boats are specifically engineered to generate amplified waves using ballast systems that can add 1,000–3,000 pounds of weight. According to research from the University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (2022), wake-surf boats produce waves significantly larger and more powerful than traditional recreational boats, with greater energy that travels farther before dissipating. On smaller lakes, that energy reflects off shorelines rather than dispersing, increasing cumulative impact.

Shoreline erosion is not simply cosmetic. Studies conducted by Wisconsin Lakes and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have found that enhanced wakes accelerate bank erosion and contribute to sediment resuspension in shallow areas.¹ When bottom sediments are disturbed, phosphorus that has settled on the lakebed can be released back into the water column. Elevated phosphorus is a primary driver of harmful algal blooms and declining water clarity. Small lakes are especially vulnerable because they have less open-water “fetch” to absorb wave energy.

Research and state guidance in multiple regions recommend that wake-enhanced boating occur in water at least 15–20 feet deep and several hundred feet from shore to reduce bottom disturbance and shoreline impact.² On a 90-acre lake, maintaining that distance consistently is challenging. The smaller the lake, the more difficult it becomes to separate high-energy wake activity from open water swimmers, kayakers, anglers, and shorelines.

There are also safety concerns. Kayaks and paddleboards have low stability in steep, closely spaced wakes. On a confined lake, wave rebound from shore can compound this effect, creating unpredictable conditions. Families who have long relied on Lake Fairlee as a safe place for

children to paddle and swim would face a very different environment.

The proposed 100-acre minimum exists for a reason. Acreage thresholds reflect scientific understanding of wave dissipation, user safety buffers, and shoreline protection. Allowing wake boats on lakes that don't meet standards may undermine scientific lake management and weaken protections for Vermont's smaller lakes.

For over a century, families and campers have come to Lake Fairlee for quiet recreation and connection with nature. We cherish mornings when we hear loons across the water and see eagles overhead. Our son has enjoyed his growing independence with fishing the clean waters from his kayak. These experiences depend on protecting the lake's ecological health and peaceful character.

Larger lakes better suited to wake-enhanced boating exist, where participants can gather with others who share that activity and operate with reduced environmental risk. With an area of 90 acres, Lake Fairlee does not fit that description.

I respectfully urge you to uphold the 100-acre guideline and veto this proposal. Protecting Lake Fairlee now will preserve its water quality, shoreline integrity, wildlife habitat, and safe recreational use for generations to come.

1. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources & Wisconsin Lakes (2019–2021). Research summaries on wake boat impacts and shoreline erosion.
2. University of Minnesota St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (2022). "Physical and Environmental Impacts of Wake Boats."
3. Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Guidance on nutrient loading and phosphorus impacts in small lakes. I previously submitted a response but accidentally selected the wrong answer to question 5 below. I SUPPORT the proposed changes and am AGAINST the use of wake boats on Lake Fairlee.

When I first started my career in health care as a Respiratory Therapist the first rule I was taught was "first do no harm"! While the proposed rule change will be a plus for many lakes, I believe for Harvey's Lake there will be HARM. Why? Because these rules will direct Wake Boaters to the few lakes still permitted for Wake Boats.

1) Wake boats are a known increased risk for invasives. Harvey Lake is one of just a small number of lakes still clean of invasives. Why on earth should the state make rules to significantly increase this risk. Shouldn't the state be doing everything they can to protect the few remaining invasive free lakes.!! Really!

FIRST DO NO HARM !!!! The Home rule must be used on invasive free lakes or Ban the wake boats to protect the invasive free lakes!

Date: February 6, 2026

To: ANR.WSMDLakes@vermont.gov

From: Lewis Creek Association

Re: Support for Vermont's Use of Public Waters Proposed Rule Change, and Suggested Improvements

The Board of the Lewis Creek Association (LCA) is writing in strong support of the proposed changes to Vermont's Use of Public Waters rules, and to suggest that they do not go far enough in some sections.

The Lewis Creek Association is a non-profit watershed organization, whose mission is to protect, maintain and restore ecological health while promoting social values that support sustainable community development in the Lewis Creek, LaPlatte River, and direct-to-lake watersheds, and throughout Vermont. We work locally to minimize the impacts of non-native invasive species, and

we study water quality in these watersheds.

Artificially enhanced wakes, created by wake boats and wake-enhancing devices, cause environmental damage, degrade water quality, create safety hazards for people in or on the water, and cause physical damage to shorelines and property.

Because of our focus on water quality and non-native invasive species, LCA is particularly concerned with environmental impacts. Wakeboats are damaging to our smaller water bodies by increasing erosion, and increasing the chances of aquatic invasive species being spread. In our focus watershed areas, we are concerned about environmental impacts of wakeboats to Lake Iroquois, Bristol Pond, and Monkton Pond. Some of these waterbodies have rare, threatened & endangered species and are ecologically sensitive areas that could be very negatively impacted by the introduction of aquatic invasive species, or by increased wakes and shoreline erosion. We strongly support the changes in this proposed rule that would prohibit wake boat use on these water bodies, and the 100-acre zone that will provide more room for boats and offer greater protection for other users.

However, we feel that these changes don't go far enough, especially as relates to the transport of aquatic invasive species, impacts to bottom sediment/scour, and threats to shorelines, nesting loons, and other users. We will touch on each of these below.

We do not support the proposal to remove the Home Lake rule. It will be challenging to enforce decontamination of boats moving between lakes. We (including LCA through our boat launch steward program) spend tens of thousands every year in funding to station greeters / boat launch stewards at many of our public water bodies, to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Why would we allow boats to be able to move between water bodies without certifying that they've been decontaminated? The home lake rule, along with required decontamination (ideally with proof to show the greeter on duty), would provide stronger protection for our waterbodies.

We support a minimum 30-foot water depth, as suggested by the Lake Waramaug Wave Impact Study final report (2024), to minimize the bottom scouring effect of these boats, which could stir up legacy phosphorus stored in bottom sediments in many of our lakes. Anything less than 30 feet will potentially cause increased phosphorus pollution in our lakes, something we are currently spending millions to try to reduce and clean up.

We encourage a 700-foot setback from shorelines, loon nests, and other lake users, which will allow both wave height and power to dissipate before reaching these areas. 500 feet is inadequate for decreasing wave power, as shown in the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory study. DEC staff themselves recommended changing the distance to 600 feet in their memo dated 9/18/23. A buffer of 700 feet is a precautionary measure (see below). Finally, we recommend including two important statements to the rules: 1) a statement that wakesports are not a normal use. The current rules did not anticipate the development of wake boats. Wake boats require special rules that differ from those normal (traditional) uses. Without this statement, traditional users of the lakes will likely be limited in their use of the waters, as they don't know who to report conflicts to, and do not feel safe on the water when these boats are out. 2) a statement of the precautionary principle: When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In conclusion we strongly support these rule changes and the improvements they make, but suggest that now is the time to make these rules even stronger to protect our local waterbodies from further degradation, and costly future clean-up efforts as shorelines erode further and bottom sediments are stirred up. Thank you, Kate Kelly, On behalf of the LCA Board

We do not have a legal designation such as some other states have for spiritual places such as sacred mountains or lakes, only for indoor places of worship like churches, mosques, and synagogues. Even our well intentioned rules and regs go nowhere near far enough to protect from Wake Boats the beauty and sacredness of Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes and the peace and safety of the plants and animals that inhabit and visit them. I would therefore increase each and every protective measure to the maximum for Lake Willoughby and for all the other lakes that will be used and abused by Wake Boats. It is unthinkable to me to allow Wake Boats on the Vermont lakes at all. A few people's recreation should not threaten every living being. Why do we believe we must accomodate wake boats at all? We do not permit the biggest and heaviest trucks on every road even for work purposes and certainly not for recreation, and we do not allow in our gymnasiums or public swimming pools certain footwear or recreational equipment that would damage floors or threaten the safety of others, so why should we bend over backwards to accomodate forms of recreation in our lakes that we know damage the lives in the lake. The Current rules are sorely lax. I support all the Proposed UPW Rules as a step in the right direction.. I write to support the revised rules for Wake Boats and Wake-boat sports on Echo Lake, although I firmly believe that they don't go far enough. Extending the no-wake perimeter to 100 acres is a step in the right direction. But there are additional concerns that your revisions should consider.

First, it is not yet clear that even the proposed perimeter for wakes is sufficient, because waves don't diminish. As we know from science, waves maintain their force and height until stopped by a barrier. And because the wave height of wake boats erodes shorelines and harms the nesting environments of loons and other animals, this watercraft should not be permitted on Vermont's smaller lakes. The state's only suitable waterbodies for this sport are Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog.

Second, the revised rules still don't outline a secure method for inspecting ballast tanks of wakeboats. Studies show that Wakeboats cannot drain its tanks completely. Because gallons of water remain in the tank after draining (reportedly up to eight gallons), these boats FAIL to meet basic criteria of inspection. A boat that cannot guarantee a status of "invasive-free" should be barred. Vermont's boat-greeter program demands AIS-status of canoes, kayaks, sailboats, and all motorboats. Why should there be an exception for Wakeboats?

Connected to this point of inspection is the third consideration: Vermont's lakes lack the proper infrastructure to carry out the necessary monitoring of such wakeboats. The boat-greeter program is not equipped to drain and clean ballast tanks. We cannot guarantee that these boats are AIS-free. This fundamental fact constitutes a profound design flaw of these boats, which manufacturers must address. Until then, the Dept. of Ponds and Lakes must follow the science and bar them. Having served as an access greeter for nine years and attended annual training sessions, I (Jim Brophy) can say that we don't have a method to inspect wakeboats properly.

Fourth, the revised rules need to consider the toxic effects of "legacy phosphorous." Activating dormant phosphorous (deposited mostly by outmoded farming methods) will promote algae and plant life that pollute oligotrophic lakes and threaten fish and plant life. Because wakeboat engines are under the boat and churn water up to 30 feet below their wake, they threaten to scour the bottoms of lakes and cause enormous environmental harm. For this reason, wakeboat use should be restricted to areas far deeper than thirty feet. The science on reactivating legacy phosphates must be consulted.

Fifth, after attending two meetings and a webinar about wakesports, I remain convinced that

wakeboats are not suited to sharing the lake with others. Kayakers, canoers, anglers, swimmers, and waterskiers are all negatively affected by an activity that monopolizes and disturbs a large area of the lake. The proposed wakesport areas are offered as a compromise, but this recommendation has two flaws. These boats still intrude upon and deter other water activities, and there is no way of enforcing this restriction.

Finally, I endorse the proposed rule of the Averill Lakes Association, which should be applied to ponds and lakes of similar size and circumstances:

“Wakesports are prohibited on lakes, ponds and reservoirs that do not have any aquatic invasive species (AIS) and do not have any resident wake boats or record of visiting wake boats as of [date].”

Let's protect Vermont's lakes, so let's pass rules and guideline that will protect their health.

I am not convinced that Vermont Fish and Wildlife can monitor and enforce wakeboat rules. As a fisherman who fishes on Echo and Seymour lakes, as well as on numerous ponds in the Northeast Kingdom, I have repeatedly seen flagrant abuse of current rules. For example, the ordinance that motorboats create no wake within 200 feet of shore is routinely violated by boat owners—time and time again. For this reason, the expectation that wakeboat owners will stay within their specified zones is highly unlikely, and there is no practical recourse to warn or fine boats not following the law. Let me also reiterate a self-evident fact about wakeboats. Even if these boats stay in their zone, their wake disrupts virtually all other activity on the lake. For swimmers, kayakers, canoers, fishing dinghies, paddleboards, and more, these waves repeatedly disrupt lake conditions. I have seen firsthand how such waves crash against the lake shore, which confirms the concerns for erosion and bird life. At public meetings, I have heard the righteous protests of wakeboat owners who claim to follow the rules, but their claims and assertions do not correspond with the behavior and practice that I have seen. On the contrary, they have repeatedly violated the standing rules. I have witnessed little regard for other users.

I am writing to express my strong support for the revisions to the rule regarding wake sports. As a long time kayak user, I am familiar with many lakes, both large and small, in northern and central Vermont, including Iroquois and Little Averill. As someone who kayaks often in Vermont, I am very aware of the impact of large wakes, both to other users of the lakes and to the lakes themselves. A large wake can be dangerous to someone in a kayak in particular. I applaud the Department's recognition that the proposed changes to the rule were needed. I urge the Department to implement all of the proposed changes. Thank you. Given the actual and potential harm to the environment, the likelihood that wake boats will continue to get more powerful and the potential for serious harm to other users of the lakes, I think these rules do not go far enough.

I attended Ohana Family Camp for 12 years with my family and continue to support Ohana's opening and closing every spring and fall. I believe the 100-acre wake zone limit proposal should be upheld without compromise. When my children were young campers, wakes and waves made activities on the lake frightening at times (e.g., kayaking, walking on the dock, swimming in the shallow swim crib). As my children grew older and began sailing, I worried about motor boats often not operating safely in low wake zones, and know from experience on other lakes that wake boats would be extremely disruptive to sailing, paddling, and lake swimming. We brought our rowing shell to use on the lake, and it would be nearly impossible to row on Lake Fairlee with a wakeboat in use. It would also make our respectful observation and protection of the loons nearly impossible. Wake boats are damaging to small lake ecology. Unnatural, high-energy waves take a long distance to dissipate and parts of Lake Fairlee are too narrow for this. Shoreline erosion would become a factor. Also, underwater propeller turbulence resuspends bottom sediments,

uproots aquatic vegetation, and releases phosphorus that causes harmful algae blooms which would affect residents and campers as well as the overall health of the lake.

I support the DEC's changes in response to your concerns about boater & swimmer safety, invasive species spread, and shoreline erosion. In addition: I support increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). I also support expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

Scarcely one year after the implementation of the most restrictive rules targeting wake boats, the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) appears to be surrendering to relentless pressure from a group against wake boats. Further limitations against wake boat activities are now proposed without scientific validation, nor reasonable purpose. The addition of these onerous potential restrictions, in fact increase hazardous situations, risk extending the spread of invasive species, and scapegoat highly responsible families, athletes and outdoor enthusiasts of all ages.

Given the absence of legitimate scientific data, I oppose the proposed additions of:

The 100 acre lake threshold

The 3000 foot straight run requirement

The expanded interpretation of a 500 foot buffer from "any object" within the wake zone

The characterizing of wakesports as non-normal use

Furthermore, the proposed changes to Section 3.7 and 4.3 are overly broad and allows for too much potential for manipulation.

On a personal note, like most health conscious outdoor lovers, I participate responsibly, respectful of

others, and with reverence of my surroundings. My now adult children grew up with identical values and a love for Vermont's lakes. For well over 30 years, along with many Vermont families, we have enjoyed motorized and non-motorized water-sports without incident. Vermont water-sports enthusiasts have been most cooperative and diligent following the newly implemented wake-boat rules. We are good stewards of our lakes and our state. Please consider the very concerning consequences of the new proposed rules. Please listen to and support the many of us in Vermont who have valid, contrary evidence and perspectives in opposition to the anti-wake-sports group. The option for question 5 below "...but they do not go far enough" is leading, gives a quite concerning impression for inappropriate bias.

Subject: Wakesports Rulemaking Comment

Agency of Natural Resources

State of Vermont

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Vermont shoreline property owner opposed to the proposed wakeboat rulemaking.

Protecting water quality matters to me, but these provisions are not tied to measurable science.

The 3,000-foot straight run, 500-foot setback from “any object,” and 100-acre minimum are not grounded in demonstrated hydrodynamic or environmental thresholds. They rely on geometry and surface area, not documented impact. The claim that wakeboats represent a “non-normal use” is also misplaced. Towed watersports with inboard boats have existed for decades. As a younger me in the 80’s, we would load our ski boat with people to increase the wake for tubing. These are the greatest memories growing up on a small Vermont lake. Technology evolving does not create a new category of water use.

Section 3.7 is particularly concerning. Allowing lakes to be restricted under a “management” or “research” designation without defined criteria or a reinstatement timeline creates open-ended uncertainty. That is not a study tool, it is an indefinite access mechanism.

Finally, this proposal feels less like balanced (environmental) policy and more like the product of special interest pressure. It mirrors the arbitrary jet ski restrictions of the 1990’s when broad limitations were imposed by special interest groups without clear, objective environmental standards. Vermont’s waters should remain accessible to all Vermonters under fair, science based rules.

I urge the Agency to reconsider any new rule making and ground any final rule in clear evidence and equal access principles.

Sincerely,
Daniel Nelson
Rutland, Vermont

In #5 below, your form is grossly biased towards furthering restrictions by offering two options for restrictive rule making and only one option for opposition.

I am deeply concerned about the potential use of wake boats on Echo Lake in East Charleston, Vermont. First, the safety of other boaters and swimmers (especially children) is severely at risk from the massive wakes created by these boats. Second, we do not have the proper decontamination sites in place to properly clean these boats to avoid spreading invasive species in our pristine lakes. Boat greeters are not trained nor equipped to handle this problem. Moreover, residual water in the large ballasts cannot be thoroughly inspected and may easily contain invasive species. Third, I am very worried about the negative environmental impacts these boats will have on the shorelines (structural damage and erosion) and the disruption of nesting loon sites and that of other water fowl. Forth, the revised rules must address the issue of legacy phosphorus. Wake boats that can churn up water 30 feet below their wake will disrupt dormant phosphorus and thus cause tremendous environmental harm, promoting the growth of algae and plants that threaten fish and other plant and animal life. I endorse increasing the wake sports zone to at least 100 acres and expanding safety zones from 200 to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I support the proposed rules to increase boater and swimmer safety and prevent shoreline erosion: in particular to increase the wakesport zone to 100 acres with a 3,000 ft. run and to expand the safety buffer from 200 to 500 ft.

I do not support the addition of the word IF in Section3/Decontamination, as in "required IF an inspection station is available." Mostly Vt inspection stations are not available and if decontamination is required, it should be required. At the very least, adopt something like the Water Transport Permit in use in New York State, an easily downloadable boater-certified form. My family has owned a cottage and property and paid taxes at Willoughby Lake for more than fifty years. We are concerned about the potential loss in value of our property. We see that loss in

value happening if the DEC, contrary to its Mission, encourages lake degradation by concentrating wakeboats in fewer Vt lakes and providing no attempt at enforcement of decontamination of their ballast. Even something as simple as the addition of something like the easily downloadable Watercraft Transport Permit, a downloadable, required self-certification that is used in NYState waters, would be a big improvement, not difficult to administer, and a deterrence to invasive species.

I've been a Vermont resident for 46 years and have enjoyed many of the State's waters for canoeing, fishing, sailing, and motor boating. For the last decade I've also taught middle schoolers to sail on Lake Bomoseen each summer.

The recent arrival of wakeboats has been in my opinion mostly unfortunate. My canoe is small (13'), and the huge wakes of these unnatural craft can easily capsize it if I don't steer my canoe into the waves just perfectly.

My greater concern, however, has to do with the safety of young children sailing or trying to learn to sail on our lakes. I've been on the water instructing these youth when a wakeboat has driven by at too close a distance.

Many boaters appear to be oblivious to the consequences of their wakes. I'm not sure the present amended rules requiring a distance of 500' are adequate. As someone who's followed Lake Bomoseen's "Eurasian milfoil wars" for almost half a century, I'm also concerned about inter-lake contamination of invasive species.

I support the proposed rules to increase boater and swimmer safety and prevent shoreline erosion: in particular to increase the wakesport zone to 100 acres with a 3,000 ft. run and to expand the safety buffer from 200 to 500 ft.

I do not support the addition of the word IF in Section 3/Decontamination, as in "required IF an inspection station is available." Mostly Vt inspection stations are not available and if decontamination is required, it should be required. At the very least, adopt something like the Water Transport Permit in use in New York State, an easily downloadable boater-certified form. My family has owned a cottage and property and paid taxes at Willoughby Lake for more than fifty years. We are concerned about the potential loss in value of our property. We see that loss in value happening if the DEC, contrary to its Mission, encourages lake degradation by concentrating wakeboats in fewer Vt lakes and providing no attempt at enforcement of decontamination of their ballast. Even something as simple as the addition of something like the easily downloadable Watercraft Transport Permit, a downloadable, required self-certification that is used in NYState waters, would be a big improvement, not difficult to administer, and a deterrence to invasive species.

For a safe turnaround in a wakeboat, it's wise to add a significant safety margin, considering factors like boat speed, wind, water currents, and driver skill. A common recommendation would be to add 50% to the estimated turning radius for added safety.

Given that a wakeboat typically needs 150-200 feet to turn around, you could add a safety margin of around 75-100 feet. This would bring the total space required to 225-300 feet for a comfortable, safe turn.

In our case, I estimate the southern and two northern narrow areas are roughly 1200 feet wide.

With the 500' requirement from shoreline, there would not be adequate space for a wakeboat to safely turn around in these areas available in the middle of the lake. In addition, extra caution should still be taken to account for varying conditions on the lake, such as frequent gusts between 15-30 mph.

Another factor is that a wake boat needs to yield to non powered boats, paddleboards, sailboats and swimmers. Given the frequency of such things on our lake, there is no practical way for a wakeboat to safely maneuver and keep the required distance. It is an accident waiting to happen as there is literally no way safe operation of these boats can be monitored and enforced.

The Lake Harvey Association has put forth other very compelling analysis which I concur. Please consider Lake Harvey as a wakesport free lake and/or a lake prohibiting wake boats.

The State's proposed changes need to exclude wake boats on Lake Harvey

Although wake boats have been around for years, their use on Vermont lakes has increased dramatically and continues to grow. Unlike traditional boats that plane across the water, wake boats travel with their bow raised, using large engines and ballast tanks to create oversized waves for wake-surfing. These waves are significantly more powerful—about 2.5 times larger and up to nine times stronger than typical waterskiing waves. Research suggests they must operate nearly 1,000 feet from shore to prevent shoreline damage.

Beyond shoreline erosion, wake boats pose environmental risks. Their powerful propwash can churn up lake bottoms that contain legacy phosphorus from past fertilizer runoff and decaying aquatic plants. When disturbed, this phosphorus reenters the water column, fueling excessive plant growth and potentially toxic blue-green algae blooms. In shallow areas—especially water less than 20 feet deep—propwash can also damage the littoral zone, a vital nearshore habitat that supports juvenile fish, insects, and the broader aquatic food web.

Increase the minimum wakesports zone (WSZ) from 50 to 100 acres and require a minimum 3,000-foot run. This will remove 12 or 13 small lakes from the wakesports eligible list. Expand the safety buffer from other users and in water structures from 200 to 500 feet.

As a Vermont boat owner who values responsible recreation, I have serious concerns about the proposed 2026 changes to the state's Use of Public Waters Rules. The 2024 rule already placed significant limitations on wakesurfing, restricting it to a small subset of lakes. Reducing that number even further would unfairly limit access for law-abiding boaters who have complied with every requirement put in place.

From my perspective, the first year under the current rule demonstrated that these activities can coexist with other lake users. Wake boats accounted for only a very small percentage of overall motorized boat launches — approximately 1.1 percent — and there were no substantiated complaints or official violations directly tied to wakesports during that season. That data suggests the existing framework is working as intended and does not warrant additional sweeping restrictions.

I understand and respect concerns about shoreline health and water quality. As a boat owner, I care deeply about protecting Vermont's lakes — they are the reason we invest in boats and spend time outdoors with our families. However, policy decisions should be grounded in clear, measurable impacts. At this point, the available state data does not demonstrate that wakesports are creating widespread harm that justifies further reducing access from 30 eligible lakes to as few as 18 or imposing a 500-foot operating buffer that may effectively eliminate participation on many waters.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has already established a regulatory

structure that allows wakesports in a controlled and limited manner. Before considering additional restrictions, the state should allow more time to evaluate long-term data under the current rule and ensure that any changes are proportionate, science-based, and fair to all lake users.

Vermont's lakes are public waters meant to be shared. Thoughtful management is essential — but so is equitable access for responsible boaters who follow the rules. Read above

Living on the lake with a 6 year old child that swims like a fish, wake boats are a very big concern for my family. The lake is not very wide so the boats only go up and down from the beach to the boat launch sending huge wake towards the shoreline. Even smaller fishing boats create enough motion that my child can't swim without me being in the water with her, but the wake boats are on another level. Last year an out of state brought in a large wake boat that made waves that made it absolutely impossible to enter the water. Even with the restrictions put in place, like keeping a certain distance from shoreline, didn't seem to matter at times. That same out of state boat was zipping around 75-100 feet from shore. Maybe they just didnt look into the rules or maybe they didnt care, either way very rarely is there any oversight that these rules are being followed. Either way, when there is a wakeboat on the lake we don't have the option to swim safely without being tossed around or worse... tossed into my dock or rocky shoreline. Kayaking is also next to impossible in conditions made by certain boats and gets very dangerous trying to navigate the hurricane size waves. Furthermore, each year I lose a few more inches of my shoreline the the treacherous waves created by all boats. Big and small. I have tried to mitigate the erosion by placing large rocks i find in the lake. It helps but its not a pefect fix. I guess its better than doing nothing. Thank you for taking the time to read and address our concerns.

I support the DEC's changes in response to concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. I really support these proposed improvements:

- o Increasing the minimum wakesports zone to 100 acres (with a 3,000-foot run). Support as written without flexibility or compromise.
- o Expanding safety buffers from 200 feet to 500 feet from other users or in water structures.

I do not support the removal of the HOME RULE. The number of lakes permitting wake boats has been reduced and that will put pressure on those lakes. Without the Home Rule, these lakes will see increased wake boat activity and certainly fall increasingly susceptible to invasive species. I ask you to please reinstate the HOME RULE.

Keep in mind that enforcement of all rules will be difficult: it is important to get this right to keep Vermont Lakes a place of joy for all boaters. Please reinstate the HOME RULE. Thank you for your thoughtful attention to this very serious issue.

The Averill Lakes are clean, pristine, AIS free and remote glacial bodies of water, where people enjoy the peace, quiet, and a laidback lifestyle. Canoes, kayaks, and fishing boats are the most common watercraft on the Averill Lakes. Allowing wake boats would be incompatible with these traditional uses. The proposal to increase the safety buffers from 200 ft. to 500 ft. is an improvement, but not enough to alleviate the adverse impact wake boats will have on the lakes and on loons in particular.

Removing the Home Lake Rule and proof of decontamination will make the Wake Sports Rule much worse and will likely result in introducing AIS to our pristine lakes.

Nearly 23 years ago, personal watercraft, a.k.a. jet skis, were banned from the Averill Lakes at the request of a few petitioners. Apparently, the Wake Sports Industry has more money and influence

than the Personal Watercraft Industry.

I am a resident of Averill and for over 42 years a lakefront property owner. I strongly oppose allowing wake boats on the Averill Lakes.

I respectfully ask the State to revisit the criteria and identification of Harvey's Lake as a wakeboard permissible lake. Our camp is close to the widest part of the lake and still our dock is rocked wildly back and forth when wakeboats go by. There is erosion to our shoreline. Boaters are focused on their wakeboarders, not the loons, kayakers, or swimmers. This creates unsafe waters for all. We are lucky to have a boat washing station but the use of its cleaning station is voluntary. Our neighbors on Joes Pond are battling invasive aquatic species. If the IAS spread to Harvey's, the staggering cost to try to rid the lake of invasive species will fall on the homeowners. We have lived in Vermont for over 30 years, raising our children here so we could instill the values of communal good and environmental caretaking. Please help our small lake community continue to support the health of the lake so it can be enjoyed by all; the visitors to the beach, the camp renters and owners, year round residents, and responsible day boaters as well as the nesting loons and eagles, the otters, muskrats, minks, beavers, turtles, frogs, and birds. The percentage of wakeboats may be small but the irreparable harm that they do to our small lakes is immense. Please take into consideration the size of the lake and the very narrow path that wakeboats would need to navigate to stay within the current state guidance.

Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted.

I'm also concerned about AIS being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. AIS prevention is important, but the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you. Hello — I'm submitting a public comment on the proposed 2026 wakesports rule changes. I support safety on the water, shoreline protection, and strong clean-water rules. I'm asking you not to adopt the proposal as written because it introduces broad new thresholds that could reduce access without clear Vermont-specific supporting data. The proposal would raise the minimum lake threshold to 100 acres, require a 3,000-foot straight run, and apply a 500-foot buffer. If the state is selecting these exact numbers, the public deserves to see Vermont field data showing they are necessary, effective, and meaningfully better than the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted. I'm also concerned about AIS being used as a general justification for wake-specific restrictions. AIS prevention is important, but the most effective approach is statewide inspection capacity, education, and enforcement that applies consistently to all trailered boats. Please keep the existing framework that defines where wakesports are permitted and pursue targeted, evidence-based updates. Thank you.

I would like to commend the DEC on proposing changes to the Vermont Use of Public Water Rules regulating wake sports. As an avid recreational rower, paddler and sailor on Lake Iroquois, I support these changes that increase safety and protection of the environment by increasing the size of the wake sport safety zone, run criteria, and safety buffer.

Most of the objections to these proposed rule changes stem from frustration over more regulation of what is perceived as simply a fun sport. However, it is important to keep common sense in mind. No one is saying to ban wake sports. The DEC is simply limiting wake sports on smaller lakes that should not accommodate them for reasons of safety and environment. The rationale is really no different than the basic tenets of establishing safe driving speeds on the road. The US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration* includes many considerations when conducting an engineering speed study, among which are the following that have direct analogy to boating activities:

- Traffic volume – how many boats are expected on the body of water?
- Roadway type – what is the size of the body of water?
- Roadway features – are there islands, inlets, obstacles on the water?
- Sight distances – how far can the boater see both in front and around them?
- Pedestrian activity – what other types of water activities are taking place, like swimming, kayaking, sailing, fishing?
- “Special conditions” (school zones, work zones) – are there unique features or specific lakes that warrant additional constraints on use of wake boats?

How do these principles relate to the current DEC proposed rule changes? The increase in size of the wake sport safety zone (100 acres), wake sport run (3000 ft), and safety buffer (500 ft) all address the key principles related to traffic volume, lake size and features, sight distances and boater/swimmer activity. In addition, these changes address the special condition that lakes are part of larger ecological systems, so these changes also provide ecological benefits by reducing shoreline and bottom erosion and impact on plant and animal habitats. Given that we can never know the true safe levels of any human activity, I appreciate the DEC recognizing the “precautionary principle” by advocating for conservative regulations to enhance safety and environmental protection.

In summary, I support the current DEC proposed rule changes. Just as drivers are asked to obey speed limits when they are out on the road, wake sport enthusiasts are encouraged to enjoy their activities, but only in areas deemed reasonably safe from a public and ecological point of view.

* <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/speed-management/speed-limit-basics>
None.

Hi. I'm Katherine Babbott from Thetford Center and a board member of the Lake Fairlee Association. I've been coming to Lake Fairlee for over 50 years.

The majority of Vermonters have consistently spoken with one voice: wake sports do not belong on Vermont's small lakes. I strongly support the proposed rule changes that would protect 13 more lakes from wake sports, including Lake Fairlee.

With its 5 summer camps, Lake Fairlee is unique. Each summer, more than 1,800 campers, some as young as 7, learn to canoe, kayak, swim, sail, and waterski on the lake. Lake Fairlee has the highest density of summer camps and campers in the state.

The 2024 rule was created without considering safety! ANR acknowledged this, even as it created a 90-acre wake sport zone on our small lake where 4 of the 5 summer camps are located. This serious safety omission puts all campers and other lake users at risk. Even when a wake boat is operated responsibly, its large waves threaten the safety of all nearby users.

Thankfully, the proposed rule changes DO consider safety! Increasing the WSZ to 100 acres and the distance from other lake users to 500 feet will protect more lakes and the public from large wave-making boats. This would be a good thing.

There is deep community support for the proposed rule change. The select boards of Thetford, Fairlee, and West Fairlee, 2 local conservation commissions, the Lake Fairlee Association, and all camp leaders support the proposed rule change.

Wake sports do not belong on small lakes where they negatively impact all other normal users who have peacefully shared the lake for over a century. There is no compromise when it comes to safety.

Please move quickly to enact the proposed rule change for the 2026 boating season. Here's to safe and peaceful sailing, canoeing, kayaking, and swimming on our small and precious Vermont lakes!

Thank you.

This process has been exhausting! Please, implement the proposed rule changes for the Summer 2026 boating season. Thank you!

My family has been residents in Westmore Vermont since 1935. I oppose all wake sports on Lake Willoughby. For safety reasons & environmental reasons erosion & pollution coming from other lakes.

I support the DEC's changes. Shoreline erosion and lake contamination are forefront concerns of mine, and these changes will help mitigate the problematic impact that I believe wakeboarding creates. I sincerely wish that wakesports would not be allowed at all in our lakes. However, since it appears they are inevitable then I support any and all changes created to protect human safety and lessen environmental damage.

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes. Specifically, I oppose the proposed 3,000-foot straight-run requirement. There is no peer-reviewed scientific research establishing 3,000 feet as environmentally necessary; the figure appears derived from typical ride geometry rather than hydrodynamic impact.

I also oppose the proposed 500-foot setback from "any object" within the wakesports zone. Existing wake research evaluates shoreline attenuation, not a 360-degree moving exclusion zone. Vermont already maintains a 200-foot safety framework that addresses vessel separation. Further, I oppose the 100-acre minimum lake threshold. Lake surface acreage is a geometric metric and does not inherently correlate to wake energy or environmental response.

I strongly oppose the "non-normal use" characterization. Inboard towed watersports clearly predate 1993; technological advancement does not transform an established recreational activity into a new use.

Finally, I oppose Section 3.7. As drafted, it creates an open-ended pathway to restrict even previously approved lakes under "management" or "research" designations without a defined reinstatement timeline. At minimum, such reviews should be limited to no more than once every five years.

After reviewing the materials cited in support of these amendments (material cited on petitioner 2023 petition and also cited with the 2025 pre rule making presentation from the ANR, I am concerned that the numeric thresholds being proposed are not supported by peer-reviewed scientific evidence.

The Agency's presentations and public materials repeatedly reference the University of Minnesota St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (SAFL) wake work, including Marr et al. (2022). However, the SAFL report is not a peer-reviewed journal publication. Peer review is the cornerstone of regulatory science because it requires independent expert evaluation of methodology, assumptions, statistical treatment, and conclusions before findings are relied upon for policy decisions. Without peer review, research remains preliminary and should be treated cautiously in rulemaking.

By contrast, the following studies ARE peer-reviewed and directly evaluate wake behavior and sediment interaction:

- Girod & Goudey (2015)**
- MacFarlane (2025)**
- Daeger et al. (Indiana Academy of Science)**

These peer-reviewed works do not establish that a 3,000-foot straight run, a 100-acre minimum lake size, or a 500-foot buffer from all objects is environmentally required.

Therefore the science does not follow the needs for the change from the 2024 current rule in place regarding these items.

The Marr/SAFL work evaluates wake energy and attenuation relative to distance and depth — not

lake acreage or operational run length. Likewise, the Daeger study shows sediment resuspension is depth-dependent and context specific, not acreage-driven.

Because statewide numeric restrictions must be grounded in reproducible, peer-reviewed science, the current proposal appears to extend beyond what the literature supports. The record instead reflects policy preference and advocacy concern rather than demonstrated environmental necessity.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments and urge the Agency to rely on peer-reviewed evidence specific to Vermont waters before adopting additional statewide restrictions.

Thank you

Matt Moore

Vermont Fisherman and Boaters on all Vermont Lakes Scientific References University of Minnesota — St. Anthony Falls Laboratory Research on wake wave characteristics, energy, and attenuation relative to distance and depth <https://cse.umn.edu/safl/news/umn-researchers-study-waves-created-recreational-boats> Marr et al., Characterization of Boat-Generated Wake Waves (2022) Wave height, energy, and attenuation study https://coalitionnavigation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/BoatGeneratedWakeWaveReport_Feb12022_Final.pdf Lake Waramaug Task Force — Shallow Water Environment Wave Impact Study (2024) Wave energy propagation and shoreline distance findings <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852df852e69cfa768783fd0/t/6791117b64c0e95b7061fb1b/1737560444987/LWTaskForce%2BShallow%2BWater%2BEnvironment%2BWave%2BImpact%2BStudy%2BFinal%2BReport%2B010825.pdf> Daeger et al., Impacts on Nutrient and Sediment Resuspension by Various Watercraft Depth-dependent sediment disturbance findings <https://lakes.grace.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Impacts-on-Nutrient-and-Sediment-Resuspension-by-Variou-Watercraft-Proceedings-of-the-Indiana-Academy-of-Science-2023.pdf> Goudey & Girod — Characterization of Wake-Sport Wakes and Their Potential Impact on Shorelines (2015)Goudey, C. A., & Girod, L. G. https://www.wsia.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WSIA_draft_report_Rev_II.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com MacFarlane — Wake Characteristics from Recreational and Wake Boats (2025) MacFarlane, G. J. (2025) <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/wake-macfarlane-2025-wakesurfing-wakeboarding-and-waterskiing-a-comparison-of-wake.pdf>

My additional concerns about the management of wake sports on VT lakes includes:

- 1) **Public Safety:** Massive wake waves can suddenly overwhelm swimmers, children, and other boaters.
- 2) **Infrastructure Gaps:** The DEC plans to replace the “Home Lake Rule” with hot water decontamination but lacks the necessary funding and timeline to build the required decon stations.
- 3) **Environmental Damage:** High-impact wakes erode shorelines and destroy loon nests. Residual water in ballast tanks can spread invasive species.
- 4) **Limited Visibility:** Heavy aft ballast weight lifts the boat’s bow, significantly impairing the driver’s view of others on the water. The fact that DEC has no enforcement mechanism or management plan in place or planned is extremely disappointing & reflects a lack of care & concern for protecting VT's lakes.

Willoughby Lake is listed by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation as one of a handful of pristine lakes. The water quality is excellent and the area is known for its scenic beauty. Minimal development in the watershed contributes to the stellar water quality of Willoughby. Wake boarding represents a major change to the pristine shorelines of lake Willoughby. Massive wake waves can not only overwhelm swimmers, but disturb boaters and cause turmoil to waterfowl. High impact waves erode the shorelines and destroy loon nests. The quiet characteristic of this lake is threatened by this type of water craft. Not to mention the spread of invasive species. Wake boarding is a variable with many layers of disturbance. Keep our lake pristine. Keep our lake protected. I am an avid swimmer and this lake is my home. Wake boarding will make me feel less safe in our waters. I support the DEC's changes.

I am writing in support of the RWVL to restrict wake boat sports on Harveys Lake in West Barnet Vermont. The health of the lake, shoreline protection guidelines and environmental hazards are my main reasons for supporting this action. I own a house on Harvey's Lake and my family has been enjoying the lake for more than 45 years. I am writing in support of the RWVL to restrict wake boat sports on Harveys Lake in West Barnet Vermont. The health of the lake, shoreline protection guidelines and environmental hazards are my main reasons for supporting this action. I own a house on Harvey's Lake and my family has been enjoying the lake for more than 45 years.

Please protect Lake Fairlee, its wildlife, and its small watercraft users by banning wake boats from it. I'd like to see wakeboard banned from all Vermont waterways.

To the Department of the ANR,

I respectfully oppose the proposed amendments, specifically :

- the proposed 3,000-foot straight run
- the proposed 500-foot buffer
- the proposed 100-acre lake requirement

The reason for this is that I personally am in the medical field, where decision or crucial and must be based on facts, results. The Agency previously stated the 2024 rule was science-based and balanced. From my review, that still appears true. The research continues to support the importance of depth and shoreline setback, which the current 2024 rule already addresses.

What concerns me is that the current proposal seems to be moving further in response to ongoing advocacy rather than new environmental findings.

Vermont has long prided itself on measured, evidence-driven stewardship. I encourage ANR to remain grounded in that tradition and maintain the 2024 compromise.

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes and submit this comment with the intention of remaining grounded in verifiable facts, not emotion, perception, or personal preference.

ANR's May 1, 2024 public statement acknowledged that the existing wakeboat rule was "science-

based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation." That conclusion reflected a multi-year process in which stakeholders with differing views ultimately met in the middle. The 2024 rule was widely understood to be a negotiated framework balancing protection and access.

Since that time, I have not identified new independently validated environmental findings demonstrating that the current rule is inadequate.

However is clear that what has changed is the volume and intensity of advocacy requesting broader restrictions.

Of particular concern is that several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking came from lakes where petitioners themselves acknowledged wakesurf boats were not currently operating. That shifts the policy discussion from managing demonstrated environmental impact to regulating based on anticipated future presence.

From a regulatory standpoint, this is analogous to lowering the speed limit on a road where no collision pattern exists simply because residents worry traffic might increase someday. Preventative management has a role in environmental policy, but it must still be anchored to measurable risk indicators.

The backbone of the 2024 rule was science and compromise. As the process moves forward, I am concerned the center of gravity is shifting toward precaution driven primarily by advocacy momentum rather than new environmental evidence.

I respectfully urge ANR to reaffirm the 2024 science-based framework and avoid expanding statewide restrictions absent clearly demonstrated ecological need. Please review the science research (both peer reviewed and non peer reviewed) and you will find that neither show the results or need for this increase in restrictions.

Respectfully, the scientific justification for these expanded restrictions appears insufficient at this time. Until there is evidence of this change to be needed based on science and facts, along with Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research is available to support the proposed changes, the 2025 rule provisions concerning the 500-foot distance from any object in the wake zone, the 100-acre requirement, and the 3,000-foot run should be withdrawn.

The current 2024 rule provides a balanced framework and should remain in effect, including the 50-acre standard, the 500-foot from shore requirement while engaged in wakesports, and the wake-zone geometry as written.

Thank you for your time,
Lilah Woodard

Hydeville, Vermont • Marr et al., 2022 — Wake wave characterization (Not peer reviewed) • UMN St. Anthony Falls Lab — wake attenuation research (Not peer reviewed) • Lake Waramaug Task Force, 2024 — shoreline wave impacts (Not peer reviewed) • Daeger et al., 2023 — sediment resuspension (confirmed peer reviewed) • Goudey & Girod, 2015 — wake-sport wakes (confirmed peer reviewed) • MacFarlane, 2025 — wake comparisons (confirmed peer reviewed)

I strongly support no wakesports on small lakes, such as Lake Fairlee. This is in concern for humans, as recreation is easier, safer, and more enjoyable without high speed boats. This is also in concern for the ecosystem of the lake itself, which includes wildlife, fish and other water creatures, and the health of the water. Question 5 is confusing! I do support the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposed amendments to the Use of Public Waters Rules (UPW) that would put more lakes off-limits to wakesports.

I support it but it doesn't go far enough! 1500 feet from shore please

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes and am intentionally framing this comment from an administrative and evidence-based decision-making perspective rather than emotion.

In my role in education, I am regularly tasked with evaluating policy changes using documented data, demonstrated need, and proportional response. When institutions implement new restrictions, best practice requires clear evidence that existing measures are insufficient. That same disciplined approach is important in environmental rulemaking.

ANR's May 1, 2024 public statement acknowledged that the existing wakeboat rule was "science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation." The 2024 rule was widely understood to be the product of significant public engagement and compromise — two sides working toward a balanced outcome grounded in the available science.

Based on the materials currently available, I do not see new independently validated environmental findings demonstrating that the 2024 framework is inadequate. What appears to have changed most significantly is the level of advocacy requesting additional restrictions.

Of particular note, several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently operating on those lakes. From a policy governance standpoint, this represents a shift from managing documented impacts to regulating based on potential future presence.

In education administration, we are careful not to implement system-wide restrictions based solely on hypothetical scenarios without evidence of an actual pattern or demonstrated need. Preventative planning has value, but it must remain proportional and supported by objective indicators.

The existing 2024 rule already addresses the primary physical variables identified in the technical literature — specifically water depth and shoreline setback. Without new, well-substantiated environmental evidence, expanding statewide numeric thresholds risks moving beyond what the current science supports and beyond the negotiated compromise that previously brought

stakeholders together.

I am also mindful that durable public policy depends on maintaining trust in consistent, evidence-driven decision making. When agencies depart from a previously affirmed science-based framework without clear new findings, it can create uncertainty about the stability of the regulatory process.

Specific Concern — Section 3.7 Wakesports

- I am particularly concerned about the proposed revisions to Section 3.7 and the expanded administrative flexibility it introduces.
- From an administrative governance perspective, durable policy works best when criteria are clear, objective, and consistently applied. Section 3.7, as proposed, appears to allow lakes to be added to or removed from wakesports eligibility through ongoing administrative determinations tied to management activities or research considerations.
- My concern is not with legitimate lake management when clearly supported by documented need. Rather, it is that the current structure risks creating an open-ended pathway where access could be incrementally restricted without the same level of transparent, science-grounded rulemaking that established the original statewide framework.
- In education systems, we are cautious about policies that rely heavily on discretionary determinations without clearly defined thresholds, timelines, and review standards. Without strong guardrails, temporary measures can unintentionally function as long-term exclusions.

For these reasons, and based on a review grounded in administrative judgment and evidence-based policy principles, I respectfully urge ANR to maintain the existing 2024 rule and preserve the integrity of the compromise that was previously reached, unless and until new, clearly demonstrated environmental data supports the need for further change.

From the standpoint of an education administrator, we consistently teach students that sound decisions must be grounded in credible, peer-reviewed evidence. Respectfully, the scientific justification for these expanded restrictions appears insufficient at this time. Until Vermont-specific, peer-reviewed research is available to support the proposed changes, the 2025 rule provisions concerning the 500-foot distance from any object in the wake zone, the 100-acre requirement, and the 3,000-foot run should be withdrawn. The current 2024 rule reflects a balanced, evidence-based framework and should remain in effect, including the 50-acre standard, the 500-foot from shore requirement while engaged in wakesports, and the wake-zone geometry as written. Thank you for your time and for your continued work on behalf of Vermont's public waters.

I support but it doesn't go far enough The restriction should increase to 1000 feet from the shore in order to protect Lake Morey.

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

Department of Environmental Conservation
Attn: Lakes and Ponds Management Protection Program
1 National Life Drive, Davis 3
Montpelier, VT 05620

RE: Technical and Scientific Rebuttal to Proposed 2026 Use of Public Waters Rule Amendments

To the ANR and Lakes & Ponds Program Staff:

I am submitting this formal comment to oppose the proposed 2026 revisions to the Wakesports Rules. I specifically contest the 100-acre lake threshold, the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement, and the expanded "any object" buffer.

As a stakeholder, I contend that these proposals lack a rational basis in the cited literature and represent an arbitrary expansion of regulatory power. Below is a detailed analysis of the scientific and procedural failures of the 2026 proposal.

I. The "Translation Gap": Misapplication of Mechanical Data

- The Department relies heavily on Marr et al. (2022) [St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (SAFL)] to justify increased setbacks. However, the proposed rules apply these findings in ways the authors explicitly did not authorize or report. Additionally, his research not recognized as being peer reviewed, and should not be taken as that.
- Non-Empirical Thresholds (3,000-Foot Rule): The proposed 3,000-foot linear requirement is an operational description of a "ride length," not an environmental metric. Marr et al. (2022) focus on wave attenuation over distance (transverse and divergent waves) and depth-to-wave-height ratios. There is no data in the SAFL report, or the Lake Waramaug Task Force (2024) study, linking uninterrupted run length to shoreline erosion or phosphorus resuspension. In the absence of such data, the 3,000-foot rule is an arbitrary geometric construct with no ecological foundation. Again, this research not recognized as being peer reviewed, and should not be taken as that.
- The Acreage Fallacy (100-Acre Rule): Geometric modeling of "modeled run length" is being used to justify the 100-acre threshold. However, SAFL (2022) confirms that wave energy dissipation is a function of distance from the source, not the total surface area of the waterbody. A 500-foot buffer functions identically on a 50-acre lake as it does on a 100-acre lake. Closing 92% of Vermont's inland water based on total acreage ignores the mechanical reality of wave decay described in the cited literature. Lastly, the SAFL is not peer reviewed, and should not be taken as that.

II. Conflict with Biological Success Data (The "Loon Boom")

A core justification for the rule is the protection of the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*). However, the State's own monitoring data contradicts the need for increased restrictions.

- Record-Breaking Recovery: According to the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) 2024 Loon Season Summary, Vermont recorded a record-high 157 territorial pairs and 123 nesting pairs in

2024. This historic peak in loon population occurred concurrently with the active use of wakeboats under the 2024 standards.

- **Biologist Testimony:** Lead loon biologist Eric Hanson (VCE) has stated that near-shore disturbances from paddlers and anglers represent a more frequent and direct threat to nesting loons than wakesports occurring 500+ feet from shore. (Source: VTDigger, June 2025).
- **The "Zero Violation" Record:** The Vermont State Police Marine Division has reported zero citations for wakezone violations since the 2024 rules were implemented. Implementing stricter rules when current rules show 100% compliance and record wildlife success is the definition of arbitrary and capricious rulemaking.

******SEE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS IN THE OPTION ADDITIONAL SPACE BELOW III. The Snowboarding Parallel: Cultural Friction vs. "Normal Use" The attempt to classify wakesports as a "non-normal use" under Vermont's Public Waters framework because of technological changes post-1993 is a legal misreach. • Technological Evolution: Wakesurfing and wakeboarding are evolutions of inboard towed watersports, an activity category that predates 1993. • The Precedent of Friction: This mirrors the 1980s opposition to snowboarding on Vermont mountains. Opponents used "environmental" claims (soil compaction/erosion) to justify bans, which were later proven to be based on cultural friction. Just as snowboarding was integrated through trail management, wakesports are managed through the 2024 offsets. To declare an evolution of a sport "non-normal" is an attempt to freeze boating technology at a 1993 level, a standard not applied to any other recreational activity in Vermont.**

IV. Unintended Consequences: The "Sacrifice Lake" Effect The proposed rules would reduce eligible inland lakes from 30 to 18. This violates the Universal Public Waters (UPW) mandate to manage use conflicts using the "least restrictive approach." • Constructive Interference: By forcing 100% of the state's wakeboats onto 8% of the available water, the DEC is creating "pressure cookers." Concentrating activity increases the frequency of waves and the likelihood of "additive wave heights," where multiple wakes combine to exceed the energy of a single boat. This will cause greater environmental impact on the 18 remaining lakes than if the activity were distributed according to the 2024 500-foot/20-foot standards. V. Administrative Overreach (Sections 3.7 and 4.3) The language in Section 4.3 allowing for temporary restrictions for "other good cause" is unconstitutionally vague. • Discretionary Removal: Combined with the Secretary's authority to add or remove lakes from the "eligible list" based on "research considerations," this creates a de facto pathway for permanent exclusion without formal rulemaking. • Scientific Necessity: I request that the rule be amended to require written scientific findings for any suspension, a limit of one boating season, and a requirement for formal rulemaking review for any extension.

Conclusion The 2026 proposal represents an attempt to solve a "perception of conflict" rather than a documented environmental crisis. The Marr et al. (2022) and Lake Waramaug (2024) studies do not provide a scientific basis for the 3,000-foot or 100-acre thresholds. Furthermore, the record-breaking success of Vermont's loon population and the 100% compliance rate of boaters prove that the 2024 rules are the appropriate, science-based, and least-restrictive management tool. I respectfully urge the ANR to maintain the 2024 rule structure. Sincerely, Greg Woodard Key Citations Included: 1. Marr et al., 2022 (SAFL): Used to highlight that the study does not link run-length to erosion. (non peer reviewed) 2. Lake Waramaug Task Force, 2024: Used to show that wave energy research focuses on distance-from-shore, not total lake acreage. 3. VCE Loon Summary, 2024: Used to prove that wildlife is thriving under current rules. 4. Hanson (VCE), 2025:

Used to point out that paddlers/anglers are the primary source of loon disturbance. 5. UPW "Least Restrictive" Mandate: Used as the legal hook to challenge the concentration of boats.

I respectfully oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports rule changes and am intentionally framing this comment around careful observation, lived experience on Vermont waters, and a fact-based review of the rulemaking process rather than emotion.

I live a quieter, nature-centered lifestyle and spend much of my time on Vermont lakes paddling, observing wildlife, and appreciating the calm that our waters provide. Because of that, I care deeply about thoughtful stewardship. I believe strongly that our lakes should be protected through measured, evidence-based policy that balances ecological health with responsible public access.

ANR's May 1, 2024 public statement noted that the existing wakeboat rule was "science-based and reflective of Vermonters' shared interests in environmental stewardship and outdoor recreation." From my perspective as someone who values both environmental protection and peaceful lake use, that balance was important and appropriate.

The 2024 rule appeared to reflect a genuine compromise — two sides meeting in the middle with the shared goal of protecting Vermont waters while allowing lawful recreation to continue under defined conditions. That kind of thoughtful middle ground is often the most durable path forward.

At this time, I have not seen new, clearly demonstrated environmental findings showing that the current framework is insufficient. What does appear to have changed is the level of concern and advocacy calling for additional restrictions and requests that should not be met just due to request.

I am particularly mindful that several of the petitions cited in reopening this rulemaking acknowledge that wakesurf boats are not currently operating on those lakes. From a stewardship perspective, this raises an important question about whether the regulatory focus is shifting from addressing observed impacts to attempting to prevent a use that may or may not occur.

In natural resource management, precaution has its place. However, long-term trust in environmental governance depends on maintaining a clear connection between regulation and demonstrated ecological need. Expanding restrictions primarily in response to anticipated concerns, rather than measured conditions, risks moving away from that grounded approach.

Specific Concern — Section 3.7 Wakesports

I am also concerned about the proposed changes to Section 3.7. As someone who values quiet recreation and the health of our lakes, I support reasonable, clearly justified management tools when they are tied to documented need. My concern is that the proposed flexibility within Section 3.7 may allow for incremental narrowing of access through administrative determinations that are not always anchored to transparent, science-based thresholds.

Policies that rely heavily on open-ended discretion can unintentionally create uncertainty for the public and for lake users of all types — including paddlers like myself. Durable stewardship works best when expectations are clear, consistent, and grounded in observable environmental conditions.

Given that the 2024 rule was presented as the science-based compromise, I believe any mechanism that could significantly alter lake eligibility should be applied with strong guards and clear evidentiary standards.

From both a quiet-water user perspective and a stewardship perspective, the existing 2024 rule already addresses the primary physical factors identified in the literature — particularly depth and shoreline setback.

Without new, well-substantiated environmental evidence, expanding statewide numeric thresholds risks moving beyond what the current science supports and beyond the balanced compromise that previously brought many Vermonters to the table.

I offer this comment not from a place of conflict, but from a desire to see Vermont continue its tradition of thoughtful, steady, evidence-based lake management that respects both ecological health and shared public use.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge ANR to: maintain the existing 2024 rule, and carefully reevaluate the scope and guardrails of Section 3.7 unless and until new, clearly demonstrated environmental data supports the need for further change. Thank you for your time and for your continued stewardship of Vermont’s treasured waters.

I oppose the use of wakeboarding on Lake Fairlee and Lake Morey. These sports are unsafe for solitary swimmers, kayakers, paddle boarders, and canoeing in general. They are disruptive of the more peaceful forms of recreation on these lakes and in general impede a peaceful and safe experience for individuals and their communities.

Dear ANR / Lakes & Ponds,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the proposed 2025 wakeboat rule amendments.

My name is Ryan Coughlin, and I am writing from Rutland, Vermont. As someone who recreates on Vermont lakes and cares deeply about water quality, I support balanced, enforceable rules that protect the resource while preserving reasonable access. I respectfully oppose three proposed additions:

**the 3,000-foot straight-run requirement,
the “500 feet from any object” provision within a wakesports zone, and
the increase in minimum lake size from 50 acres to 100 acres,
and I also want to respond to the related claim that wakesports constitute a “non-normal use” of Vermont public waters.**

Sections 3.7 and 4.3 — Proposed Rule Changes

1) Opposition to a 3,000-Foot Straight-Run Requirement

I am not aware of any peer-reviewed environmental or boating-safety research that identifies 3,000 feet as a necessary minimum run length for safe wakesurfing. The studies most often referenced in this discussion focus on wake formation, wave attenuation, and potential environmental effects—they do not establish a required straight-line distance for operation. Where “3,000 feet” appears, it is commonly presented as a description of a typical ride length or as an assumption used for spatial modeling and zoning calculations. In other words, it reflects practical riding patterns and geometry, not a measured hydrodynamic or safety threshold.

Conclusion: Because there is no peer-reviewed study demonstrating that a 3,000-foot straight run is required, this appears to be a policy decision. It should not be presented as science-based without supporting research showing necessity.

2) Opposition to “500 Feet From Any Object” Within the Wakesports Zone

Vermont already operates under statewide boating safety rules that rely heavily on a 200-foot framework related to shorelines, swimmers, and vessel separation. The main wakesurf-related research referenced in public debate is generally focused on wake energy and how waves diminish with distance—not on “moving exclusion zones” or mandatory separation distances from all objects.

For example, research discussions associated with the University of Minnesota / St. Anthony Falls Laboratory analyze how wake characteristics change with distance and depth. That addresses wake behavior and attenuation, but it does not establish that 500 feet from all objects is necessary for safe operation.

A requirement of 500 feet from shore and 500 feet from other vessels or swimmers effectively creates a very large moving buffer. Under typical lake conditions, this can make legal operation impractical—turning a theoretical allowance into a functional prohibition.

Conclusion: Without boating-safety or collision-risk research supporting a 500-foot requirement from other vessels or swimmers, this reads as a policy restriction, not a science-based safety standard.

3) Opposition to Increasing Minimum Zone Size from 50 Acres to 100 Acres

Lake acreage is not, by itself, a scientific variable tied directly to wake impacts. Area thresholds are typically derived from assumed straight-run distance, wake width, and setback distances—primarily geometry and spatial assumptions, not hydrodynamic necessity.

Vermont’s current framework already requires at least 50 acres, along with shoreline setbacks and depth requirements. Increasing the minimum to 100 acres would remove additional waterbodies from eligibility by definition. If that is the intended outcome, it should be stated plainly as a policy choice.

Conclusion: Absent evidence showing that 50 acres with existing safeguards is insufficient—and that 100 acres is required—this change functions primarily as a policy lever to reduce access.

Overall Scientific Context (Sections 3.7 and 4.3) Vermont’s existing wakesports zone definition is already specific and restrictive. More broadly, the available research on wake attenuation is mixed and highly dependent on local conditions such as depth, fetch, shoreline type, and usage patterns. Within this rulemaking record, Vermont has not presented Vermont-specific hydrodynamic field research demonstrating that these additional numeric thresholds are necessary statewide. **Final Conclusion** I oppose these additional restrictions because: 3,000 feet

is not shown by research to be required; it appears to be an operational assumption. 500 feet from any object is not supported by wake attenuation science and operates as a practical access barrier. 100 acres functions as an exclusion threshold, not a measured environmental necessity. Wakesurfing is an evolution of long-standing towed watersports and fits within Vermont's normal use framework for public waters. Taken together, these proposals appear to be mechanisms to further restrict access without Vermont-specific scientific findings demonstrating the need for these escalated thresholds. Thank you for considering my comment. Sincerely, Ryan Coughlin Rutland, Vermont

There should never be wakeboarding boats allowed on Willoughby lake. Our pristine and much-loved lake is a valuable resource for all who use it. However, it is an even more important of a resource for the waterfowl, small animals, aquatic species and plants that live in and around the lake. Algae blooms cause issues in that they are caused by sediment that gets churned up by these large motors and wakes. Boater and swimmer safety is also a primary concern. When these boats are operated, the front of the boat rises in such an extreme fashion that the driver has a limited view of what is in front of him /her.

I am really concerned that the DEC plans to replace the "Home Lake Rule" with hot water decontamination but lacks the necessary funding and timeline to build the required decontamination stations. This is truly putting the cart before the horse and could cause a host of problems if not well regulated and verified. I believe that the quiet enjoyment by fisherman, boaters, paddle boards, swimmers and canoeists should be of primary concern. Once these are impacted I believe that tourism will deteriorate and our revenue from Lake activities will decrease.

I support the DEC's changes in response to our concerns about boater & swimmer safety and shoreline erosion. We are trying to protect our loons.

To the Vermont Water Resources Board

Reference opposition to expanding the 2024 wake boat regulation

My name is Robert Sterling. I am a retired VT State Game Warden after serving 26 years. I patrolled the waters of Vermont, to include Lake Champlain, Lake Bomoseen, Lake Hortonia and numerous other bodies of water within my district from 1997 to the end of 2022. I have extensive experience enforcing Vermont's boating laws and regulations. I was also a Vermont Boating safety instructor from 1997 to May 2025, with my last boating safety class taught in April of 2025.

I am writing to express my opposition to expanding the 2024 Wake boat regulations on Vermont's waterways. I have several reasons why these regulations should not be expanded from their current form.

In 2024 when the wake boat regulations were enacted there was great discussion on both sides for and against regulating wake boats on Vermont's lakes. A compromise was made which extended the safe boating distance from 200 feet from shore to 500 feet as well as which bodies of water a wake boat could operate in wake mode. These regulations were more restrictive on wake boats than any other motor boat or watercraft.

The new regulations were lightly enforced beginning in 2025 and there has been little to no education to the wake boat community. The current boating safety curriculum taught to students in 2025 has not caught up with the new regulations. Materials did not change for instructors and students. It has been left up to the individual instructor, if the class was taught in person and not online, to explain these new rules. The definitions such as home lake's for wake boats and cleaning and draining procedures can be confusing and have not been in place long enough for even the instructors to have time to learn and explain to their students.

During my time as a Game Warden I have seen the rise of many different controversial watercraft and conflicts between different users of our waterways. I spent time working with all users to find compromise. I believed that all users should have equitable use of our natural resources, even when one group does not support the use of the other.

Jet skis were small, loud and fast. With time the operators were educated on the ethical use of their machines and current laws were enforced. These machines are now common on our lakes and have no greater violations than any other motor boat.

Bass boats then entered the scene. These were again very loud and extremely fast. I myself was almost hit by a bass boat operating at over 60 mph on Lake Champaign. Through education with the bass fishing community and enforcement these boats have become common place. Regulations take time to be in before we can see if they are working.

I encountered countless boating and watercraft violations in my years protecting Vermont's waterways. The majority of these violations were lack of life jackets and boating within 200 feet of shore and persons in the water. These violations were spread across all watercraft and rarely if ever Wake boaters. Wake boats in wake mode operate at a slow speed and rarely operated within 200 feet of other boats or shore. When distance violations occurred and were the most dangerous, it was from fast operated motor boats not related to wake boating at all.

I was involved with several drownings in our Vermont waters. These drownings could have been prevented if these people had simply been wearing a life jacket. The two drownings that come to mind involved a canoe and a kayak respectively. The majority of life jacket violations that I issued were to small boats and paddle craft, yet these users are at greater risk of drowning than any other watercraft. Wake boats, jet skis and bass boats were almost always in compliance with these laws and regulations.

In conclusion I ask that the VT Water Resources Board pause on expanding the current 2024 Wake boat rule and give the current regulation an opportunity to be taught and enforced. After several years it would be prudent to re examine the law to see if conflicts have ben resolved and the effects of the current law have done what was intended by their creation. Robert Sterling Retired VT State Game Warden and boating safety instructor (802)287-1419 Sterling942@icloud.com

I go to my summer cabin for rest and relaxation.

The wakesport vehicles are loud . When in my cabin I have to cease talking until they pass.

While on my kayak I am unsettled first to make sure they see me and second fighting the wake. I don't like that they are polluting the lake . Also the lions get disturbed.

I grew up in Norwich and have vacationed at my parents place on Lake Fairlee for nearly 55 years. Lake Fairlee is a small lake best suited to canoes, rowboats, and small putt-putt fishing boats. Over the years waterskiing has been limited to certain areas due to the danger to others in the Lake and the narrowness of the lake which makes much of it too close to shore to be at speed required for the skiers. Wake boats are dramatically worse. My mother nearly got knocked over last summer by the waves of a wake boat and we feel we can't safely use the lake for any activities when they are present because of the risk of swamping small boats and making rafts impossible to stand on. Teaching children to swim is impossible with those big waves around. If we want ocean waves we would go to the ocean.

I feel that wake boat type of craft should only be used on very large bodies of water and well away from shorelines where their waves will increase erosion dramatically. There really is no location on Lake Fairlee where their use is safe, and doesn't impair the use of the lake by all of the other users. One active wake boat shuts down the entire Lake for all other craft, swimmers and even people on docks. When we see them and look around everyone on the Lake heads for the shoreline. They are that much of a menace.

Please do not allow them on these small Lakes.

I don't know why the deadline was extended but I hope my additional vote against wake boats on Lake Fairlee helps in the decision making process.

Wake boats increase invasive species risk, cause shoreline erosion, damage docks, and increase safety conflicts to the benefit they provide to a small number of users. Allowing them on small lakes is like permitting leaf blowers in a quiet library — one activity overwhelms the shared space and diminishes its value for everyone else.

I support the Lake Harvey Association petition to ban wake sport activities from Lake Harvey - wake boats would not be prohibited on the lake but the use of ballast or other wake enhancing features would be.

Thank you. Wake boats are like leaf blowers in a quiet library - one activity overwhelms the shared space and diminishes its value for everyone else.

I have recently heard folks who think wake boats are not a significant issue because the wave is 'only 1 ft'--a 1 ft wave is 2 ft from trough to peak--quite sufficient to swamp a kayak, disturb a swimmer, luff and jibe a sail. While some may find wake boats enjoyable--their impact on other's ability to safely use the willoughby lake for pursuits that have no effect on other's enjoyment is profound. Add to the safety issues the disturbance to the ecology when these boats move from lake to lake (there being no real way of preventing contaminated boats from spreading invasives) will accelerate the degradation of lake willoughby. Listen to the petitioners--let already degraded lakes host wake boats- Willoughby is one of the few remaining large lakes that has not yet been so degraded. People who make money from wake boats will try to tell you that they are not a

problem and that people just want to have fun, but their fun will ruin the lake for wild swimmers, fisher folk, kayakers, sailors and many others whose pastimes dont disrupt others with large unpredictable waves and noise

I support stronger public safety regulations.

I support the wakesports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wakesurfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I support a 500' safety buffer increase between wakesports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wakesurfing boat's negative environmental impacts. My family has owned a camp on Shadow Lake in Glover for 85 years. Keeping the lake ecologically healthy and safe for all campers is very important to me.

I am a long-time property owner in Westmore and would like to express my concern regarding a potential change in wakeboard rules that could affect Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes. I strongly oppose wakeboard use on VT lakes for the following reasons.

Wakeboards and wakesurfing boats are unhealthy for lakes because they produce massive, high-energy waves and intense propeller turbulence that, unlike standard boats, reach deep into the lake bed. These large wakes cause severe shoreline erosion, destroy aquatic plant habitats, and stir up bottom sediments, releasing nutrients like phosphorus that trigger harmful algal blooms and degrade water quality.

Sediment Resuspension: The heavy ballast and powerful propellers of wake boats (which can weigh up to 5,000 lbs) churn up mud and sediment from the bottom, even in depths of 15-25 feet. This reduces water clarity and stirs up nutrients that cause excessive, sometimes toxic, algae blooms.

Shoreline Erosion and Property Damage: Wake boat waves are up to twice as high and have four times the energy of other boats, accelerating the erosion of shorelines and damaging docks and, in some cases, harming loon nests.

Habitat Destruction: The intense turbulence and wave energy damage or uproot aquatic plants, which are crucial for protecting the shoreline and providing habitats for young fish and other wildlife.

Safety Risks: The large waves created can be dangerous to smaller vessels like kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards.

Invasive Species Spreading: The increased water circulation and ability to hold water in ballast tanks can accelerate the spread of aquatic invasive species.

KEEP WAKEBOARDING OFF LAKE WILLOUGHBY! KEEP WAKEBOARDING OFF LAKE WILLOUGHBY!

As a property-owner on Shadow Lake and long-time visitor to the lake, I support stronger public safety regulations to ensure that all residents are able to access and enjoy the lake safely.

Therefore,

I support the wake sports zone definition of 100 acre minimum and 3,000 foot run as written without the flexibility of compromise for allowing even 1 wake surfing boat on Shadow Lake in Glover.

I also support a 500' safety buffer increase between wake sports activities and other lake users and loon nesting sites.

I support conserving the ecological health of Shadow Lake, which is too small for even 1 wake surfing boat's negative environmental and safety impacts. I have been visiting Shadow Lake for over 20 years. My parents own a home on the lake, and my sisters and I recently purchased additional property on the lake. In the more than 20 years that I've been visiting the lake, recreational use of wake sport boats has increased, and these boats, due to the speed at which they operate, pose a threat to swimmers and people operating canoes and kayaks and other non-motorized craft. Operating at such speeds limits the drivers' ability to see and avoid slower boats and swimmers, significantly increasing the chance of injury to swimmers and boaters. As a parent, I'm especially concerned about this, as I've watched wake sport boats come very close to kids swimming and boating, scaring them and placing them in unnecessary danger. In addition, the noise and disruption the boats cause pose a nuisance to people living on the lake and have a significant impact on wildlife, including loons, that live and nest on the lake. Finally, because of issues with the lake's dam, the water level on Shadow Lake has been reduced by over a foot and will continue to be reduced over the next few years. This reduction in the size and depth of the lake increases the danger of collisions due to wake sport boats because there is less room in which to operate them, and also puts additional strain on the lake's ecology and environment, which would be damaged even further by continued wake sport boating.

Very concerned about the residual water in ballast tanks and the spreading of invasives. Also, the high impact waves erode shorelines and destroy loon nest. Our grandchildren are afraid to swim when the huge waves are spotted. Safety is a concern too... how can drivers see ahead of them?

The proposal doesn't do enough to save these lakes and ponds. Some, like Little Averill are such pristine natural refuges that not motors, even electric should be allowed on them. Only swimming and personal paddle craft like canoes should be allowed on them.

Furthermore, they assume that waves dissipate with distance, when, in most instances, they increase as they approach a shore, and especially no large boats should operate within 500 feet of the shore. Ask anyone whose seashore home was destroyed by a 30 foot wave which started as a miniscule ripple from afar. use my comments in #3.

We live on the shoreline of Caspian Lake. The lake is very shallow here and huge waves like those generated by Wake boats cause erosion to the shore. Caspian has been a quiet lake for swimming, canoeing, kayaking, sailing and fishing all of which are greatly disrupted and imperiled by huge waves. Regardless of proposed distance restrictions on Wake boats, how would enforcement occur? And even if Wake boats adhere to those restrictions, how can the safety and enjoyment of other lake users be ensured when huge waves dominate? Please prohibit Wake Boats on Caspian Lake and all VT Lakes other than Champlain and Memphremagog.

I oppose the rule change on eliminating the “Home Lake” rule. Seymour Lake is one of the last remaining lakes in VT that does not have any invasive species. By removing this “Home Lake” rule, you are putting Seymour Lake in great jeopardy. If you don’t put in place protection for our Lakes, you’ll be spending hundreds of thousands of dollars later trying to eradicate/control the invasive species. Now we are learning that many of the chemicals used for controlling these issues have huge consequences on our health, such as ALS or Parkinson disease. Please place strict requirements for using wake boats on our lakes to protect the rare gem that VT has such as Seymour Lake.

I also fear that eliminating wake boat use in some of VT’s smaller lakes will cause an increase of wake boats in the other lakes. Seymour Lake already has a few regular wake boat users and an increase in the number of users will be very detrimental for the lake’s shoreline. As a property owner on Seymour Lake, I witness the damage the wake boats do to the shoreline as they go back and forth for hours. Tighter control needs to be done to how many wake boats are allowed on the lake all together.

VT has strict rules on clearing trees from your lakefront property to protect erosion but then allows erosion on the lake-side caused by wake boats. VT needs to put in place stricter laws on erosion caused by these wake boats and protection from invasive species.

I oppose some of the changes but I also have other concerns.

Dear Secretary Moore and Agency of Natural Resources Rulemaking Team,

I submit this comment as a Vermont attorney and public waters user who has reviewed the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments with particular attention to administrative law standards, evidentiary support, and internal consistency of the rulemaking record.

While I fully recognize the Agency’s statutory authority to regulate public waters in furtherance of public health, safety, and welfare, I respectfully oppose adoption of the proposed expansion at this time and instead recommend maintaining the 2024 wake zone framework while additional Vermont-specific data is gathered and evaluated.

My concern is not with the Agency’s authority to act, but with whether the present record sufficiently demonstrates that the proposed numeric thresholds reflect the least restrictive practicable approach supported by a rational factual connection, as required under Vermont administrative principles.

1. Corridor Geometry and Mathematical Sensitivity

The proposal relies heavily on a modeled wakesports corridor of approximately 3,000 feet in length and 1,000 feet in width. However, the underlying arithmetic demonstrates that the resulting acreage is highly sensitive to modest changes in assumed operating conditions.

Using the Agency’s own three-minute ride premise (of 10-12 mph):

At 10 mph for 3 minutes, the run length is approximately 2,640 feet, not 3,000 feet.

At 8 mph, the run length is approximately 2,112 feet.

At 7 mph, which is not uncommon for younger or beginner riders, the run is shorter still.

When these empirically reasonable speeds are inserted into the same 1,000-foot corridor model, the resulting acreage falls materially below the proposed 100-acre threshold (approximately 60.6 acres at 10 mph and 48.5 acres at 8 mph).

Importantly, the record itself acknowledges that modest adjustments to run length, speed assumptions, and buffer width produce dramatically different acreage outcomes and directly affect lake eligibility determinations.

Where a regulatory threshold is this sensitive to selected inputs, administrative prudence generally favors careful justification of why the chosen value represents the minimum necessary restriction rather than one of several plausible modeling outcomes.

2. Open-Water Application of the 500-Foot Buffer

The proposed rule effectively converts a shoreline-based attenuation concept into a uniform “500 feet from any object” operational requirement, thereby creating the 1,000-foot corridor width.

However, the technical discussion in the record distinguishes: shoreline erosion processes in shallow water, and on-water user safety conditions in deeper water.

The materials note that relying on shoreline attenuation literature as the primary factual basis for an “all objects” safety buffer may not be rationally connected to the asserted safety objective.

From an administrative law perspective, this distinction is significant. Converting a shoreline protection distance into a universal open-water separation standard is a policy step that warrants its own evidentiary support, particularly where the rule materially affects lake eligibility statewide.

3. Limitations of the Field Comparison Evidence The record references a practical field comparison used to inform the buffer determination. However, the documented conditions indicate the observation was: • conducted from a moving platform, • subject to wind and drift, • influenced by other vessel traffic, • not replicated across lakes or days, and • limited to only two measured distances. These factors introduce multiple uncontrolled variables and prevent the comparison from isolating the wakeboat’s wake under controlled conditions. The record itself notes that the observation does not establish the minimum effective safety distance and does not demonstrate that a uniform 500-foot buffer is necessary statewide. Given the statewide regulatory consequences of the proposed buffer, additional controlled and replicated analysis would materially strengthen the rule’s technical foundation.

_____ **4. Petition Context and Proportional Response** The petition summary indicates that approximately 55% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity. While precautionary concerns are legitimate inputs to policymaking, broad statewide restrictions are typically strongest when closely aligned with demonstrated patterns of conflict. The current record suggests a mixed factual landscape that may benefit from further monitoring under the existing 2024 framework. _____ **5.**

Recommended Path Forward In my professional judgment, the Agency would be on firmer administrative footing by: **1. Maintaining the 2024 wake zone rule during a multi-season evaluation period; 2. Completing full integration of the existing rule into boating education and enforcement guidance; 3. Conducting or commissioning controlled, replicated open-water safety**

analysis across varied Vermont lake conditions; and 4. Convening an ongoing multi-stakeholder roundtable to monitor documented conflicts, AIS concerns, and operational safety in real time. Such an approach would not limit the Agency's future authority but would strengthen the evidentiary and procedural foundation for any subsequent rulemaking.

Conclusion For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully urge the Agency not to adopt the proposed 2025 expansion at this time and instead to maintain the current 2024 framework while additional Vermont-specific data and implementation experience are developed. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued stewardship of Vermont's public waters. Respectfully submitted, Tom Acker

Dear ANR and DEC Rulemaking Staff,

I respectfully submit this comment to oppose the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and to request that Vermont maintain the 2024 wake zone rule as written. I am a Vermont resident and routine user of public waters in more than one way: some days I'm paddling or swimming, other days I'm operating a motorboat with family members on board. Because I move through these same spaces at different speeds and from different craft, I care most about rules that are clear, workable, and actually improve safety rather than rules that compress everyone into narrower corridors.

The 2025 proposal hinges on a geometric "rounded impact zone" model that assumes a 3,000-foot straight run and a corridor that is 1,000 feet wide based on a 500-foot buffer on both sides. The problem is that the 1,000-foot width is being treated like a proven safety necessity for open-water operation, when the evidentiary foundation offered in the record does not demonstrate that. The materials distinguish shoreline erosion science (where wave energy changes as waves enter shallow water) from on-water user safety (which occurs in deeper water where the wave behavior and handling dynamics differ).

Using shoreline attenuation research as the primary factual basis for an "all objects" open-water safety buffer is not the same thing as demonstrating that a 500-foot distance from every object is the minimum needed for safe shared use statewide.

This matters because the buffer assumption does not just "protect" other users; it also determines whether a lake becomes legally usable at all, and it can create unintended safety consequences by forcing traffic into narrower, more crowded pathways. On many Vermont lakes, a "500 feet from any object" construct is functionally a moving exclusion bubble. When you impose an all-object separation rule in a limited basin, you risk funneling boats and paddlers into the remaining space and increasing crossing conflicts. Safety is not only about separation; it is also about having enough room for maneuvering, predictable patterns, and avoidance options. The record also describes a "practical, non-scientific field comparison." However, the conditions noted show that the comparison was not controlled or replicated, relied on a moving platform with drift, involved other traffic, and tested only two distances (200 and 500) with no intermediate evaluation.

That kind of observation may be an anecdotal data point, but it does not establish a statewide minimum buffer "around any object," and it does not identify the least restrictive distance that could achieve similar safety outcomes.

Even using the Agency's own time and speed framing, the 3,000-foot run is not mathematically tied to the stated "3-minute ride." At 10 mph for three minutes, the run length is 2,640 feet, not 3,000.

Math is Quantitative and reproducible and should be used in this rule as that.

For example:

At 8 mph, which is what my wife rides at, the run length is 2,112 feet, NOT 3,000

At 7 mph, the run is shorter still, and even at 11 mph (which is the top speed we run on our boat), it

is 2,940 (again less than 3,000).

An average value should not be used to generate a numerical result that is then further rounded, as this compounds approximation error and can materially distort the outcome.

These variables directly change the “impact zone” acreage and the number of potential safe pathways, which is exactly why the current 100-acre threshold feels untethered to the modeled footprint and overly sensitive to assumptions rather than evidence. The record itself explains that modest input changes materially alter eligibility outcomes.

I also ask the Agency to consider the petition context. The petition record indicates that over 50% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity (it was noted in their petitions), however they were considered if the statewide expansion should exist. That does not mean concerns are illegitimate; it means statewide expansion should be calibrated carefully and transparently under the least restrictive practicable approach. My request is straightforward: keep the 2024 rule in place, fully implement and educate on it, monitor conflicts, AIS concerns, and safety issues in real time. If adjustments are needed later, Vermont will be able to justify them with Vermont-specific data rather than assumptions.

Dear Madam / Sir:

As homeowners on a Vermont lake shoreline (Lake Willoughby), we are writing to express our strong concerns about permitting wakeboats on these unique and cherished bodies of water. Vermont lakes are pristine gems, renowned for their clear waters, serene environment, and ecological significance. Allowing wakeboats on these lakes would jeopardize these attributes and pose significant safety, environmental, and community risks.

Wakeboats will accelerate invasive species introduction and will undo past decades of careful ecological maintenance. Once entering the water, a typical wake boat takes on between 200 and 600 gallons of water in its internal ballast tanks to create larger wakes. Before leaving the lake, that water is mostly pumped back out of the boat, but wake boats can retain up to 23 gallons of water inside ballasts and bilge after being drained with electric pumps (source: “The Effects of Wake Boats on Lake Ecosystem Health: A Literature Review,” February 2024). The transport of this water as wakeboats are introduced to new lakes can rapidly spread aquatic invasive species (e.g., Eurasian watermilfoil, spiny water flea, zebra mussel) between these waterbodies. Once introduced, invasive species are nearly impossible to eradicate and can wreak havoc on native ecosystems. Over the years, Vermont lakes have spent tens of thousands of dollars on boat ramp attendants and invasive species removal to ensure the lake largely remains free of invasive species, and it is imperative to maintain stringent protections to preserve this status.

Safety is also a significant concern. The large wakes produced by wakeboats create hazardous conditions for smaller, non-motorized watercraft and swimmers, and can capsize kayaks and paddleboards or endanger people enjoying the water near the shoreline. The relatively narrow width of many Vermont lakes exacerbates these risks, as waves travel farther and more forcefully in confined spaces. The proposed wakesports zone would expose much of the lake to these conditions, and as there is no continuous marine police enforcement on most Vermont lakes, it is doubtful that wakeboaters will observe this zoning in any case.

As property owners with ~100 ft of shoreline, we are also quite concerned with the acceleration shoreline erosion caused by wakeboats’ large, powerful waves. The steep banks and fragile ecosystem of Vermont lakes are especially vulnerable to such disturbances. Increased erosion

damages aquatic habitats, destabilizes the shoreline, and can result in sedimentation that clouds the water and impacts fish and other aquatic life. The crystal-clear waters of Vermont lakes are a defining feature of the state's identity, and permitting wakeboats would threaten the delicate balance that keeps these lakes healthy and beautiful.

Wakeboats also pose a serious threat to the loon population on many Vermont lakes – these are a vital part of the local ecosystem and an iconic species cherished by the community. Loons rely on calm, undisturbed waters for raising their young. The large wakes generated by wakeboats can swamp nests located along the shoreline, leading to habitat abandonment. Furthermore, the increased noise and boat activity can stress loons, causing them to expend energy avoiding disturbances rather than caring for their young. Over time, such disruptions can lead to population declines and jeopardize the continued presence of loons on Vermont lakes.

In conclusion, permitting wakeboats on Vermont lakes would have far-reaching negative consequences for the environment, public safety, and community well-being. We urge you to prioritize the long-term health of Vermont lakes and its ecosystem by maintaining strict restrictions or bans on wakeboats. Protecting Lake Willoughby and other Vermont lakes ensures that future generations can continue to experience and appreciate their unmatched natural beauty. Thank you for considering these concerns. We hope you will take action to preserve Vermont lakes as a sanctuary for nature and a peaceful retreat for all who visit.

Dear Agency of Natural Resources and Department of Environmental Conservation,
I respectfully submit this comment in opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and in support of maintaining the 2024 wake zone rule while Vermont completes full implementation, education alignment, and multi-season monitoring.

I am a regular user of Vermont public waters in multiple capacities, and have a bowrider surf enhanced boat myself. After reviewing the proposal, petition summaries, and supporting materials, I have serious concerns that the proposed numeric thresholds are driven more by layered assumptions than by demonstrated, replicated evidence specific to Vermont lake conditions.

Petition Context Raises Threshold Concerns

The petition record itself reflects a mixed factual landscape that does not clearly support a broad statewide tightening at this time. According to the Agency's own summary, approximately 55% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity.

That statistic is important. Where a majority of petition lakes did not document ongoing wakeboat presence, expanding statewide restrictions using a heightened eligibility threshold risks affecting waterbodies that were not the source of the underlying concern. Sound administrative practice typically calibrates regulatory reach to demonstrated conditions rather than precautionary projections alone.

This is particularly relevant where the 2024 rule has only recently been implemented and has not yet been fully evaluated over multiple boating seasons.

Mathematical Foundation Does Not Support the 3,000-Foot Assumption

The proposed framework relies heavily on a conceptual straight run of 3,000 feet tied to an assumed three-minute ride. However, the arithmetic does not support treating 3,000 feet as the natural mathematical outcome of the Agency's own time and speed premise.

Using standard unit conversion:

- 1 mph = 1.4667 feet per second
- 3 minutes = 180 seconds

At 10 mph:

$10 \times 1.4667 = 14.667$ ft/sec

$14.667 \times 180 = 2,640$ feet

At 8 mph:

$8 \times 1.4667 = 11.733$ ft/sec

$11.733 \times 180 = 2,112$ feet

At 7 mph (common for younger riders and beginners):

$7 \times 1.4667 = 10.267$ ft/sec

$10.267 \times 180 = 1,848$ feet

None of these empirically reasonable operating speeds produce a 3,000-foot run in three minutes. The 3,000-foot figure therefore reflects a policy selection layered on top of the time assumption rather than the direct mathematical result of it.

Acreage Sensitivity Demonstrates Outcome Dependence

When these realistic run lengths are inserted into the proposed 1,000-foot corridor model (derived from the 500-foot buffer on each side), the resulting acreage varies dramatically:

- $2,640 \text{ ft} \times 1,000 \div 43,560 = 60.6$ acres
- $2,112 \text{ ft} \times 1,000 \div 43,560 = 48.5$ acres
- $1,848 \text{ ft} \times 1,000 \div 43,560 \approx 42.4$ acres

Yet the proposed eligibility threshold is 100 contiguous acres — substantially higher than any of the modeled outcomes produced by the Agency's own time framework.

Importantly, the record itself acknowledges that modest changes in run length, operating speed, and buffer width produce large shifts in acreage outcomes and eligibility determinations.

Where a regulatory cutoff is this sensitive to selected assumptions, upward rounding and conservative parameter stacking are not neutral choices; they directly determine which lakes remain eligible and which do not.

Width Assumption Relies on Limited and Non-Replicated Observation

The 1,000-foot corridor width stems from applying a 500-foot buffer from "any object." However, the supporting field comparison described in the record contains significant methodological limitations:

- conducted from a moving platform
- subject to wind and drift
- influenced by other boat traffic
- not replicated across lakes or days
- relied on a single kayaker's subjective observation
- evaluated only two distances (200 ft and 500 ft)

The record itself acknowledges that these conditions introduce uncontrolled variables and do not establish the minimum effective safety distance statewide. From a technical standpoint, a single, non-replicated observational comparison cannot reasonably support a uniform statewide operational buffer that materially affects lake eligibility. Education and Implementation Gap Remains Equally concerning is the implementation sequence. The Vermont boating safety handbook was updated in 2025 yet still does not clearly integrate the wakesports restrictions into the same structured instructional format used for other major operational rules. In conversations with fellow boaters over the past season, many responsible operators remain uncertain about key aspects of the 2024 rule. This indicates the State is still in the education phase of implementation. Expanding restrictions before completing full education integration risks creating uneven awareness rather than improved compliance. Recommended Path Forward For these reasons, I respectfully recommend the Agency: • Maintain the 2024 wake zone rule • Complete full education and handbook integration • Conduct controlled, replicated open-water safety analysis • Monitor real-world conflicts over multiple seasons This measured approach

would better align with least-restrictive principles while preserving Vermont's strong tradition of shared water use.

Dear ANR Rulemaking Team,

I respectfully submit this comment in opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports amendments and in support of maintaining the 2024 wake zone rule while Vermont completes full implementation, education alignment, and multi-season monitoring.

My concerns focus on three interrelated issues: (1) the mathematical sensitivity of the proposed acreage threshold, (2) the empirical limitations of the width and buffer assumptions, and (3) the current gap between rule adoption and public education.

Petition Record Does Not Demonstrate Uniform Statewide Conditions

The Agency's own summary indicates that approximately 7 of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity.

This is a material fact in evaluating proportional regulatory response. Where a majority of petition lakes did not document ongoing wakeboat presence, a statewide tightening based on an elevated acreage threshold risks extending beyond the factual conditions that initially prompted review.

The 2024 rule represented a negotiated compromise framework. Before further statewide restriction is layered on, the administrative record would benefit from additional multi-season monitoring demonstrating that the existing framework is insufficient.

Run-Length Arithmetic Does Not Support the 3,000-Foot Baseline

The proposal repeatedly references a three-minute ride as part of the conceptual basis for the wakesports corridor. However, straightforward unit analysis shows the following:

1 mph = 1.4667 ft/sec

3 minutes = 180 seconds

At 10 mph:

$10 \times 1.4667 \times 180 = 2,640$ feet

At 8 mph:

$8 \times 1.4667 \times 180 = 2,112$ feet

At 7 mph (commonly used for youth or beginner riders):

$7 \times 1.4667 \times 180 = 1,848$ feet

None of these empirically reasonable operating speeds produce a 3,000-foot run within a three-minute timeframe. The 3,000-foot figure therefore functions as an added policy margin rather than

the direct mathematical consequence of the stated premise.

Acreage Outcome Is Highly Assumption-Dependent

When these realistic run lengths are applied to the proposed 1,000-foot corridor width (derived from the 500-foot buffer on each side), the resulting acreage varies substantially:

$$2,640 \times 1,000 \div 43,560 = 60.6 \text{ acres}$$

$$2,112 \times 1,000 \div 43,560 = 48.5 \text{ acres}$$

$$1,848 \times 1,000 \div 43,560 \approx 42.4 \text{ acres}$$

Yet the proposed eligibility threshold is 100 contiguous acres, significantly above any of the modeled results generated using the Agency's own time framework.

Importantly, the rulemaking materials explicitly acknowledge that modest adjustments to run length, operating speed, and buffer width produce dramatically different acreage outcomes and eligibility determinations.

Where a regulatory cutoff is this sensitive to input selection, the choice of conservative assumptions combined with upward rounding is not mathematically neutral — it directly determines which lakes remain eligible and which are excluded.

Width and Buffer Determination Relies on Limited Observation

The 1,000-foot corridor width is anchored to a 500-foot “any object” buffer. However, the supporting field comparison described in the record contains acknowledged methodological limitations:

- moving measurement platform
- wind and drift effects
- presence of other vessel traffic
- single-observer subjective reporting
- no replication across lakes or days
- only two distances evaluated (200 ft and 500 ft)

The record itself notes that these conditions introduce uncontrolled variables and do not establish the minimum effective safety distance statewide.

From an evidentiary standpoint, a single, non-replicated observational comparison cannot reasonably support a uniform statewide operational buffer that materially affects lake eligibility.

Education and Handbook Integration Remain Incomplete Equally significant is the implementation sequence. The Vermont boating safety handbook was updated in 2025, yet the wakesports restrictions have not been fully integrated into the structured instructional framework used for other major boating rules. Supplemental Comment 3000ft run... In discussions with fellow boaters over the past season, many responsible operators remain uncertain about the specifics of the 2024 rule. This indicates the State is still in the education phase of implementation. Expanding regulatory requirements while the education pipeline remains incomplete risks uneven awareness and inconsistent compliance. Recommended Administrative Path For these reasons, I respectfully recommend the Agency: • Maintain the

2024 wake zone rule • Complete full education and handbook integration • Conduct controlled, replicated open-water safety analysis • Monitor real-world conflicts across multiple seasons • Convene a standing multi-stakeholder roundtable This approach would strengthen the evidentiary foundation for any future rulemaking while preserving Vermont's long tradition of balanced public water use. Thank you John

February 27, 2026

VIA EMAIL/ONLINE PORTAL
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Department of Environmental Conservation
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620-3522

RE: Use of Public Waters Rulemaking – Wake Boats (Echo Lake, Charleston)

To the Agency of Natural Resources:

I am writing as a property owner on Echo Lake for over 20 years to formally express my opposition to the use of "wake boats" on our waters. As a former national competitive water skier, I can personally attest that hitting an unexpected wake of this magnitude can cause serious physical injury, including concussions and fractures.

Echo Lake is uniquely unsuited for wake surfing for the following critical reasons:

- **Public Safety:** The powerful wakes generated by these vessels create extreme hazards for traditional lake users, including swimmers, fishermen, kayakers, sailors, paddleboarders, and water skiers.
- **Property & Shoreline Damage:** Our shoreline is not equipped to absorb such high-energy waves. Wake boats will cause accelerated erosion and significant damage to personal property, including docks and moored boats.
- **Ecological Impact:** Echo Lake is a vital habitat for loons. The displacement of water and shoreline surge from these boats will destroy nesting sites and disrupt local wildlife.
- **Invasive Species:** The internal ballast systems (bladders) in these boats are notorious for harboring invasive species, such as Eurasian Milfoil. The introduction of these species would be catastrophic for one of Vermont's cleanest lakes.

I urge the Agency to recognize that the safety and environmental health of Echo Lake must outweigh the recreational desires of a specific boat class. Please be advised that if wake boats are permitted to operate here, property owners are prepared to pursue full legal restitution and damages against both boat owners and the State of Vermont for any contamination, environmental degradation, or physical damage suffered.

Echo Lake deserves protection, not the destruction inherent to wake boat operation.

Sincerely,
Dr. Hugh Hawkins
Echo Lake Property Owner
n/a

Dear Secretary Moore and ANR Rulemaking Team,

My name is Eric Splatt. I am a certified boat captain, Vermont boating safety instructor, and long-time marine industry professional who has been actively engaged in wakesports discussions in Vermont since approximately 2018. I respectfully submit this comment in opposition to the proposed 2025 wakesports rule expansion.

Professional and On-Water Experience

My perspective is grounded in decades of direct participation and instruction in these sports. I have been wakeboarding since 1989, wakesurfing since 1990, and previously competed as a slalom skier. During the 2010s, I managed Splatt's Watersports when it was actively operating and have personally taught numerous riders through structured wake instruction programs. Because of this background, I am deeply familiar with the real-world operating characteristics, speeds, and safety considerations associated with these activities.

Lack of Meaningful Industry Engagement

Over the past seven years, our dealership and our customers have remained actively engaged in wakesports policy discussions. However, during development of this most recent expansion, there was no substantive outreach to our business regarding operational realities or economic impacts beyond a single dealership visit.

During that visit, it was stated by Agency participants that there was difficulty identifying a wakeboat. That moment was concerning. When additional restrictions are being contemplated on a specific vessel category, it is important that the regulated equipment and its operating profile are fully understood before the rule framework advances.

Petition Record Does Not Clearly Support Expansion

The petition summaries reflect highly mixed conditions across lakes. As documented in the petition analysis, 55% of petition lakes lacked established wakeboat activity, and among lakes that would remain eligible, the vast majority reported either none or only minimal presence. This does not present a uniform statewide conflict profile and warrants caution before further tightening eligibility statewide.

The 3,000 × 1,000 × 100 Acre Model Does Not Reflect Real-World Operation

Based on decades of direct instruction and observation, the average operational speed across user types in my experience is approximately 10 mph, with a common range of 7–11 mph depending on rider ability and activity.

Using straightforward physics:

$$10 \text{ mph} \times 1.4667 \text{ ft/sec} \times 180 \text{ seconds (3 minutes)} \\ = \text{approximately } 2,640 \text{ feet}$$

This is the real-world distance for a typical three-minute run at the average operating speed. The current 3,000-foot assumption therefore exceeds the typical operational profile, and when compounded with the assumed 1,000-foot corridor, it materially inflates the acreage threshold. In my professional experience running wake schools and instruction programs, the added "shape-forming" or "dog-leg" allowance embedded in the model is not universally necessary and does not appear to be supported by replicated Vermont-specific testing. Treating that maneuvering assumption as a fixed geometric requirement risks artificially expanding the

calculated footprint and unnecessarily eliminating otherwise suitable waterbodies.

Buffer Distance Concerns

The proposed 1,000-foot corridor is derived from a 500-foot buffer from any object. However, the State's long-standing 200-foot rule has historically governed safe separation from other vessels and objects and already exceeds comparable distances in neighboring states such as New York and New Hampshire.

Before doubling or more than doubling that effective operating envelope, the record should clearly demonstrate why the existing standard is insufficient. At present, that showing does not appear fully developed.

Section 5.18 Definition Raises Discrimination Concerns Finally, Section 5.18 warrants careful reconsideration. As currently structured, the definition risks capturing a broad range of behind-the-boat activities that are not dependent on ballasted wakeboats. Modern watersports — including hydrofoiling and certain surf-style activities — can occur behind non-ballasted vessels and, in some cases, without a traditional tow rope once underway. If the definition is not carefully refined, it may unintentionally regulate or restrict activities and vessel types beyond the apparent intent of the rule, creating potential inequities among users.

Economic Impact Analysis Does Not Reflect Direct Industry Data I am also concerned by the ICAR economic discussion. The filing acknowledges that further restrictions “could potentially decrease the sale of these vessels in Vermont,” yet ultimately concludes that impacts to small business are negligible.

Supplemental Public Comment Eco... At the same time, the Agency states the analysis relied in part on feedback from boat dealers. However, despite our long-standing involvement in this issue and our position as a leading wakesports dealer in the state, our business was never contacted during development of that economic review. That disconnect is significant. Our documented experience shows measurable contraction in wakeboat sales and related service activity following implementation of the 2024 rule, including:

- approximately 75% decline in wakeboat unit sales
- reduced pro shop revenue
- decreased service and storage demand
- measurable State Sales and Use Tax losses tied to this segment

These are not theoretical impacts — they are reflected in actual operating data. The economic record would benefit from direct verification with the businesses most affected.

Education and Implementation Gaps Remain As a certified Vermont boating safety instructor, I am also concerned that the State's own education pipeline has not fully integrated the 2024 wakesports requirements. The current boating handbook and certified online course pathways have not consistently embedded these operational rules into the core instructional framework.

supplemental education and regu... Advancing additional restrictions while the existing rule is still working its way through education and enforcement channels creates unnecessary confusion for the boating public.

Request for Clarification and Course Correction Given the concerns outlined above, I respectfully request that the Agency:

- pause the proposed 2025 expansion,
- maintain the 2024 rule while full implementation and education occur,
- conduct direct outreach to Vermont marine dealers regarding economic impact, and
- clearly identify for the record which boat dealers were consulted in the ICAR analysis.

Transparent engagement with directly affected stakeholders will strengthen both the rulemaking record and public confidence in the process.

Request For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that the Agency:

- maintain the 2024 wake zone rule at this time,
- conduct additional Vermont-specific operational analysis,
- clarify which marine dealers were consulted for the ICAR economic review, and
- refine Section 5.18 to avoid unintended overbreadth.

The wakesports community stands ready to participate constructively in a collaborative, data-driven process. Durable policy will come from alignment of real-world operation, sound mathematics, and inclusive stakeholder engagement. Thank you for your consideration. And if the rule must move forward with new language I request additionally that the changes are 2,640 foot minimum run x 200ft x 50 acres. Respectfully submitted,

I am submitting this comment as a long-time Vermont marine industry participant who has worked closely with boating families, lake associations, and regulators for decades. I want to begin by reaffirming that our business and our customers support thoughtful stewardship of Vermont waters and reasonable, evidence-based safety measures. However, after carefully reviewing the proposed 2025 wakesports rule and the supporting record, I must respectfully oppose the rule as currently written. My concern is not simply about the outcome — it is about the foundation used to reach it.

The Expansion Appears to Outpace the Underlying Record

In reviewing the petition materials, what stands out is the variability in conditions across lakes. Several petitioning waterbodies noted safety concerns while also indicating that wakeboats were not an established presence on their lakes. That mixed record does not clearly demonstrate a uniform statewide operational problem.

At the same time, the State had already implemented meaningful structural changes through the 2024 wake zone rule — changes that many boaters, businesses, and educators are still working to fully absorb and communicate.

Given that context, it is difficult to understand why the regulatory framework is being expanded further at this stage without clearer Vermont-specific evidence showing that the current rule is insufficient.

Scientific and Mathematical Alignment Is Not Clearly Demonstrated

Equally concerning is the apparent reliance on modeled assumptions to support the proposed 3,000 ft × 1,000 ft → 100 acre construct.

From a technical standpoint, durable policy typically rests on one or both of the following:

- clearly demonstrated applied science,
- or internally consistent mathematical necessity.

In this case, the record suggests that key elements of the corridor model were developed through layered assumptions regarding run length, buffer application, and resulting acreage. The rulemaking materials themselves acknowledge the sensitivity of the acreage outcome to those inputs.

When a regulatory threshold materially affects lake eligibility statewide, the public reasonably expects to see a clear and reproducible linkage between:

- observed operating behavior,
- applied mathematical reasoning, and
- validated safety outcomes.

At present, that alignment is not consistently evident in the record.

Policy Built Primarily on Assumptions Raises Process Concerns

I want to be careful and respectful in how I say this.

Assumptions can be useful as planning tools. They are often part of early modeling exercises. But when assumptions become the primary structural basis for binding statewide policy — particularly where the real-world impacts are significant — the burden for transparency and validation becomes much higher.

From the outside, the current proposal can give the appearance that the geometry of the rule has been constructed first, with the evidentiary support still catching up.

That perception alone is worth addressing through additional analysis and open technical dialogue.

A Collaborative Path Forward

Vermont has historically been successful when complex water-use issues are addressed through sustained collaboration and careful data review.

I respectfully urge the Agency to:

- maintain the 2024 wake zone rule**
- complete full education alignment,**
- conduct additional Vermont-specific analysis where needed, and**
- convene a consistent multi-stakeholder working group to review real-world conditions together.**

Additionally if the rule is to move forward with its concepts, I ask that the 3000 ft x 1000 ft x 100 acres is rewritten as 1500 x 500 x 50 ,as this is a meet in the middle concept.

The wakesports community — including responsible operators and small businesses — wants to be part of a durable, science-informed solution. At the moment, many in that community feel the process has moved ahead without fully bringing the underlying facts, math, and stakeholder dialogue into alignment. That is a gap worth closing before further expansion occurs.