

**Testimony to Senate Natural Resources & Energy Committee  
May 6, 2025**

Good morning. First I'd like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to speak today.

I am sure you have heard all the issues regarding wake boats and wakeboarding numerous times now. What we are talking about and pleading for is the control of:

Environmental issues

- Shoreline erosion (our small beach area...)
- Phosphorous stirred up
- Spread of Anti Invasive Species (AIS)

Damage issues/Property damage

- Lake walls (our wall repaired, costly...now partially washed out from behind)
- Shoreline erosion
- Docking systems (including boats moored to docks)

Safety issues

- Many close calls
- A few examples I have observed include
  - Paddle Boarders
  - Kayaks
  - Pontoons
  - Swimmers

On my lake alone in the past few years I have seen paddle boarders and kayaks tipped over, swimmers literally rolled and dunked from the waves, damaged watercraft pounded against docks, and one instance where a friends granddaughter was playing in 1-2' of water and a wake boat went by. The grandmother saw the wake coming and jumped in the water and they were both rolled into the concrete lake wall. It was fortunate adults were sitting nearby.

Wildlife Protection

- Loons, fish habitats

The ANR/DEC issued a new ruling on the use of wake boats in 2024. I thank the ANR/DEC for the legwork and efforts put into this new ruling - however I believe it is inadequate. The ANR recently released a Final Proposed Ruling (Vermont Use of Public Waters). In that ruling it states that "Based on actual VT Lake geomorphology, a 50-acre zone will allow for a minimum wakeboarding run of 3,000 feet,". That is not true of irregularly shaped areas.

In the planning stages DEC staff in their Sept. 18, 2023 12-page summary memo to Secretary Julie Moore had recommended 600 feet and 60 sq ft contiguous acreage. ANR's final rule came out with 500' and 50 sq ft. which I do not feel is adequate. A recent study out of Minnesota states that "a minimum of 500' is necessary" and 1,000' is safer.

Since the new regulation came out 10 petitions for banning wakesports were received from lakes/ponds last summer.. That is an indication of the inadequacy of the ruling.

There has been no action, that I know of, on the individual petitions. It does not appear at this time that any new ruling will happen this year. It seems only natural that rulings on these petitions would be made prior to this summer season which is fast approaching. Even if any ruling would be temporary until any revisions to the regulation are made.

Home Lake Rule: The lack of having any Home Lake Rule effective last year was disappointing, after the ANR, upon questioning from LCAR, assured LCAR that it in fact would be ready for the summer. In my opinion on this is that regardless of what is done here will not be easily enforceable, if at all. We rely on our "greeters" who have no authority to allow/or not allow any wake boat to enter the lake. The only way to truly enforce it to prohibit wakeboarding on all Vermont Inland lakes.

Although Joe's Pond has 54 acres that meet the depth, distance from shore, and 50 contiguous acres it does not have the required 3,000 foot run. The run is closer to 2,300 feet. There should be adjustments for "irregularly shaped" areas including the requirement of a 3,000' straight run. The size and maneuverability of anything less can make it difficult to navigate safely, increasing the risk of accidents and collisions. Joe's Pond 54 acres, and only a 2,300' straight run which is on the busiest part of the Pond (and close to the Access boat ramp area), results in a severe space congestion with accidents waiting to happen.

While wakesurfing may offer a thrilling experience for some, it is crucial to consider the long-term consequences for our Lakes and Ponds. By understanding the potential negative impacts, we can make informed decisions about how to enjoy our waterways responsibly and ensure their preservation for generations to come.

I quote from the ANR website: "RESPECT. PROTECT. ENJOY." The last sentence from their Mission Statement states: "WE MUST BE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS FOR THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS."

Wake surfing should not be allowed on Vermont Inland Lakes/Ponds.

Thank You