

March 2023

To: The Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

**RE: LD 379 – An Act to Responsibly Regulate Recreational Boats on Maine Lakes**

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Stacey Keefer, Director for the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA), and a resident of Union. MMTA represents over 120 Maine businesses and an industry comprised of boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, marine retailers, and more. Boating is a major contributor to the value added to Maine's gross domestic product, and surpasses the value added by all other major recreation sectors. The federal government's Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that data shows that boating and fishing surpass the value added by RVing, hunting, snow activities, hiking, camping, ATVing, equestrian, bicycling, and recreational flying combined. (source <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>). With that in mind it is important for us to be both cautious about restrictions that could affect boating, and also cautious about activity that could upset the quality of our water resources.

LD 379 proposes to a resolve for the Department Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall conduct a study on the effects of wake boats and their impact on shoreline property, including the use of a "wake safety zone." On behalf of the members of MMTA, I would like to encourage the Committee to consider supporting LD 379 before consideration of **LD 693 - An Act to Protect Inland Water Quality, Shorelines, Wildlife and Public Safety by Prohibiting Operation of a Wake Boat to Create an Enhanced Wake Close to Shore or in Shallow Water**.

MMTA would encourage the study to make an inventory assessment of how many water bodies would be affected by the proposed 500 foot wake safety zone and minimum 20 foot depth. We would also encourage the study require the Department report out on known complaints and violations involving wake boats to address such questions such as:

- Are there repeat offenders in the wake safety zones?
- Are complaints primarily coming from specific lakes or areas of lakes?
- How steady is the presence of law enforcement on the lakes with complaints?
- Are any dock damage complaints coming from docks that extend much further into the water?
- Do any lakes mark their 200 ft wake safety zone with buoys at consistent intervals to help remind boaters what that zone looks like?

With respect to environmental impacts, we would like to see questions addressed such as:

- Does Maine's geology make some lakes more sensitive to depth turbidity than others?
- Should loon nesting periods have a different set of rules about wake safety zones for all types of vessels, not just wake boats?

MMTA would also encourage the state to work with some of our national colleagues from the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA), and Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA) on this topic who are more familiar with various wake studies nationally. NMMA has a list of flaws that were noted in the Minnesota wake study.

We would also like to point out that the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) has worked in national collaboration with law enforcement to suggest some policies and definitions with respect to wake boat topics.

As always, MMTA is willing to participate in any stakeholder discussions and assist the Department and the Committee as needed.

Respectfully,  
Stacey Keefer  
Maine Marine Trades Association, Executive Director

