

December 27, 2023

Hello RLPOA Member,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors to make you aware of recent Wisconsin legislative activities related to wakeboarding and wakesurfing. Senator Mary Felzkowski (SB 680) and Representative Rob Swearingen (AB 656) have proposed legislation to regulate these activities on Wisconsin waters. Senator Andre Jacque (LRB-5069/1 - SB tbd) has proposed alternative legislation to regulate the two activities. Should any legislation become law, it will have an effect on the Round Lakes ecosystem, lake shore property owners, and all users of the lakes.

Summary of Bills 680 & 656

- Provides legal definitions for wakeboarding and wakesurfing activities and states they are a form of aquaplaning, and subject to existing boat use regulations.
- Prohibits the activities on water bodies of 50 acres or less.
- Prohibits the activities on waters where the distance from a shoreline and the nearest opposite shoreline is 400 feet or less.
- Prohibits the activities within 200 feet of a shoreline of any waters.
- Prohibits municipalities or lake districts from being more restrictive than 200 feet from shore, but allows for an “exemption” or “lesser number of feet.”

Key takeaway: The bills regulate the activities of wakeboarding and wakesurfing, not the type of boat used to facilitate the activities.

The proposal authored by Senator Andre Jacque is summarized by LRB-5069/1.¹ Unfortunately, I cannot find the exact LRB language, but a partial summary of the proposal is as follows:

Summary - LRB-5069/1

- Prohibits enhanced wakes on lakes smaller than 1500 acres.
- Prohibits enhanced wakes within 700 feet of shore or from any boat, swimmer, or other individual using the water on lakes 1500 acres or larger.
- Preserves local authority to enact ordinances stricter than these provisions.

¹ Note this language is currently being circulated to members of the senate and assembly, seeking additional sponsorship. Once this process is complete it will be assigned legislative numbers.

Board of Directors Position

The Board is in agreement that additional regulation of these activities is needed. We believe that responsible legislation should be based on the following principles:

- Environmental protection of the waters of Wisconsin is paramount.
- Potential for enhanced wake induced damage to lakeshore, boats, piers, etc. should be minimized.
- Potential for an enhanced wake to adversely affect the enjoyment of non-motorized water activities, or the enjoyment of watercraft at anchor or adrift should be minimized.
- Everyone has the right to enjoy the waters of Wisconsin safely.
- The specifics of any regulation with regard to distance from shore, water depth, etc. should be based on available scientific research, not opinion.

The Board of Directors values the environmental health and sustainability of Round Lakes above all else. The Board has a neutral position on wakeboarding and wakesurfing. We recognize that Round Lakes are premier recreational lakes, and support the responsible use of the resource by all members of the public.

The language of these bills is initial language, and it is highly likely that it will be modified during the legislative process. We encourage members to reach out to legislators and provide your opinion to help craft the legislation. For additional information, please see the Sawyer County Lake Forum [website](#).

Below are Links to legislators' government websites:

Bill Authors

Senator Mary Felzkowski	(SB 680)	Mary Felzkowski
Representative Rob Swearingen	(AB 656)	Rob Swearingen
Senator Andre Jacque	(LRB-5069/1)	Andre Jacque

Round Lake Area Legislators:

Senator Cory Tomzake	(District 29)	Cory Tomzake
Representative James Edming	(District 87)	James Edming

In closing, the Board of Directors will continue to monitor the legislation as it progresses through the process and will provide updates, such as this one, when appropriate.

Daniel Kollodge
RLPOA President