



Wisconsin Association of Lakes

A nonprofit group of citizens, organizations, and businesses working for clean, safe, healthy lakes for everyone.

4513 Vernon Boulevard, Suite 101 · Madison, WI 53705-4964

608-661-4313 · 800-542-5253 (in WI) · 608-661-4314 fax

wal@wisconsinlakes.org · www.wisconsinlakes.org

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Chair Senator Mark Miller
Room 409 South, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

February 7, 2008

Dear Senator Miller and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for SB 385.

Ensuring that recreational boating is safe for lake users, and does not cause unintended declines in lake water quality is an important priority for many of our Lake District and lake association members.

Establishing slow-no-wake zones in local boating ordinances is a common approach that balances different recreational uses with natural resource needs. More than 500 local boating ordinances have been passed across the state on lakes greater than 50 acres.

Currently there is **no** slow-no-wake restriction for motorboats within a given distance of a shoreline. Boating too close to shorelines can negatively impact sensitive shorelines when:

- nearshore wave action contributes to shoreline erosion problems,
- propellers stir up lake bed sediments, reducing water clarity,
- nutrients, like phosphorus, are released from disturbed lake bed sediments, which can cause problems such as algae blooms.
- propellers damage or uproot shoreland plants, which provide fish habitat.

A slow no wake zone **is** required for boats operating within a 100 feet of a man-made structure to reduce the likelihood of damaging that structure. We feel our shorelines are equally important and deserve the same level of protection. State law requires a no-wake-zone for personal watercraft within 200 feet of the shoreline; we feel boats should be subject to comparable regulations. This proposal also includes an opt-out provision, allowing local government to exclude lakes if the law significantly impacts recreation.

This bill will help reduce the negative impacts on our lakes caused by boating too close to shore and improve safety for citizens who are fishing, swimming, and paddling in nearshore areas.

Thank you for your support on this issue.

Tamara Jackson
Wisconsin Association of Lakes Director of Communications