



Wisconsin Association of Lakes

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

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Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Chair Senator Mark Miller
Room 317 East, State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

February 11, 2009

Dear Senator Miller and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support for SB 12. We would like to thank Senator Jauch for introducing this important bill that will help protect sensitive shorelines and improve public safety.

Ensuring that recreational boating is safe for lake users and preventing unintended declines in lake water quality is an important priority for many of our Lake District and lake association members.

Boating too close to shorelines can contribute to shoreline erosion problems, reduce water clarity by stirring up lake bed sediments, release phosphorus—the nutrient responsible for algae blooms—from lake bed sediments, and harm fish habitat when propellers uproot shore land plants. This bill is a positive step forward to preserve water quality and prevent shoreline degradation.

We understand the word shoreline as used in the bill to mean the actual edge of the water. It may be useful to include in the bill draft a clarification that the intended meaning of “shoreline” is the “point where the water meets the land.” Fluctuating water levels on Wisconsin lakes can lead to variability in shoreline location.

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. We are pleased that the same protections are being extended to all lakes in the state, while recognizing that there are some locations where a more localized approach may be desirable to accommodate recreational use.

We appreciate the necessity of limiting high speed watercraft traffic near the shore to improve public safety for citizens who are fishing, swimming, and paddling on our shorelines. The exemption for water skiers is appropriate and perhaps could even be extended more broadly to allow water skiers exemption in circumstances where they are outside buoyed areas.

Thank you for your support on this important issue.

Tamara Jackson
Wisconsin Association of Lakes Director of Communications