



**RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE
OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
House State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE RESOLUTION 7992 – RESOLUTION URGING THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT TO STUDY AND REGULATE THE IMPACT OF WAKE BOATS ON RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC WATERWAYS

Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write in support of House Resolution 7992, which urges the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to conduct a comprehensive scientific study on the environmental, ecological, shoreline, water quality, invasive species, and public safety impacts of wake boat operation on Rhode Island's freshwater lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, and to develop an appropriate regulatory framework governing their operation.

The League appreciates the intent of this resolution to ensure that policy decisions related to wake boat activity are informed by sound scientific analysis. Many Rhode Island municipalities include freshwater lakes, ponds, and reservoirs that serve as important environmental, recreational, and community resources. Local officials frequently receive questions and concerns from residents regarding shoreline erosion, water quality, and safety related to recreational boating activities. A comprehensive study conducted by the Department of Environmental Management could provide valuable information to guide thoughtful and balanced policy decisions in this area.

Municipalities also have a strong interest in maintaining the environmental health of these water bodies, which often serve as important assets for tourism, recreation, and local quality of life. Understanding how wake boat operation may affect shoreline stability, sediment disturbance, aquatic habitats, and nutrient loading will help inform both state and local discussions about responsible water resource management.

Additionally, a review of regulatory models adopted by other New England states may help identify best practices that appropriately balance recreational boating opportunities with environmental protection and public safety. Clear and consistent statewide guidance could also assist municipalities in responding to resident concerns and questions regarding wake boat activity.

The League would encourage that, as this study is conducted, opportunities be provided for municipal input, particularly from communities that host significant freshwater resources. Local officials can provide valuable on-the-ground perspectives regarding shoreline conditions, recreational use patterns, and public safety considerations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns appreciates the sponsor's attention to the stewardship of Rhode Island's freshwater resources and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and the legislature on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Rossi", written in a cursive style.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections Committee