

March 10, 2026

House State Government & Elections Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Chair Shanley, Vice Chair Corvese, and Honorable Members of the House State Government & Elections Committee:

My name is Sean Fitzpatrick, and I own Rhode Island Water Sports, an Oakland based business that has introduced countless Rhode Island families and young people to towed water sports and boating over the years. I am writing to respectfully oppose the Joint Resolution entitled "Urging The Rhode Island Department Of Environmental Management To Study And Regulate The Impact Of Wake Boats On Rhode Island Public Waters."

Wake boats are an essential part of my business and a major reason many of our customers spend time on the water, purchase boats and equipment, and support local marinas, service shops, and waterfront businesses. Targeting wake boats for additional study and regulation, separate from other vessels, sends a harmful signal to current and prospective boaters and jeopardizes a meaningful segment of Rhode Island's marine economy without clear evidence that new wake-specific rules are needed beyond what is already on the books.

Rhode Island already has tools to address irresponsible operation, such as boater education, speed limits, nowake zones, distance from shore rules, and existing enforcement authority. In my experience, the issues that do arise are almost always about operator behavior, not the design of a particular boat. A better approach would be to focus on boater education, consistent enforcement of existing laws, and collaboration with stakeholders rather than singling out one type of vessel in statute.

I urge you to reject this resolution and instead work with small businesses like mine, marinas, lake associations, and safety educators on practical, education-first solutions that protect our waterways while preserving access for responsible wake sports and boating.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sean Fitzpatrick  
Owner, Rhode Island Water Sports

Oakland, Rhode Island