



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
235 Promenade Street, Room 425
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chairman
House Committee on State Government and Elections
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: HJR 7992 Joint Resolution Urging the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to Study and Regulate the Impact of Wake Boats on Rhode Island Public Waterways

Dear Chairman Shanley,

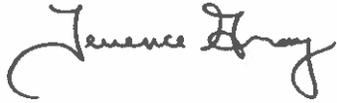
Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on HJR 7992, which urges DEM to complete a study on the impacts of wake boat operations on Rhode Island's freshwater lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, and to regulate the use of wake boats on state waters. DEM cannot implement the requirements of this legislation to complete a comprehensive scientific study with existing resources. However, DEM is considering regulating the use of wake boats at lakes and ponds with a state nexus such as those with state boat launches or located within state properties.

A wake boat is a specialized watercraft designed to create large wakes used for water sports such as wakesurfing and wakeboarding. As wake boats have become more popular there have been concerns raised about the impacts they have on the waterbodies where they are used. HJR 7992 would urge DEM to "complete 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." While such a study could be useful to understand the impacts of wake boat usage, we note that completing it would require retaining the services of outside consultants and DEM does not have existing resources that could be used for this purpose. Furthermore, other states have completed similar studies that DEM can use to better understand the impacts of wake boats on lakes and ponds.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. Please feel free to contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of

Legislative Affairs, at ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

cc: Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
The Honorable Michael Chippendale
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director
Sue Stenhouse, Minority Chief of Staff