



SIERRA CLUB
WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Sierra Club Statement on Wake Boat Legislation

The Sierra Club–Wisconsin Chapter supports strong protections for Wisconsin lakes from the impacts of wake boats. Wake boats are specifically designed to create large, powerful waves for surfing, and those waves can travel far beyond the immediate area of the boat, disturbing shorelines, wildlife habitat, and other lake users.

AB 1033 does not go far enough to protect our lakes. The bill proposes a 200-foot setback, but research and on-the-water experience show that wake boat waves can carry well beyond that distance, continuing to erode shorelines and stir up sediments long after the boat has passed.

Protective wake boat legislation would require a 500-foot setback.

The bill also lacks a minimum depth requirement. Wake surfing in shallow water can churn up lakebeds, resuspend nutrients, damage aquatic plants, and degrade water quality. A depth restriction of at least 30 feet is needed to reduce these impacts.

Wake boats can also contribute to the spread of invasive species. The powerful ballast systems that take in and discharge large volumes of water can inadvertently transport invasive plants, animals, and microscopic organisms from one lake to another if not thoroughly cleaned and drained. The turbulence created by these waves can further fragment invasive plants, making it easier for them to spread and take hold. **Protections should be incorporated into legislation to protect from the spread of invasive species.**

Every lake in Wisconsin is unique, with its own ecology, shoreline character, and community uses. Local governments are best positioned to understand these differences and should be allowed to set stronger, lake-specific protections where needed. **AB 1033 must preserve this local control to ensure Wisconsin's lakes are protected for everyone.**

Please pass wakeboat legislation that protects our lakes with setbacks and depth limits that will keep our lakes healthy and usable for everyone.