



# Winnebago County

*The Wave of the Future*

## **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024 @ 8:30 AM**

### **AMENDED AGENDA**

**THIS AGENDA WAS AMENDED ON MARCH 21, 2024 TO INCLUDE THE HIGHLIGHTED ITEMS.**

JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER  
625 E. COUNTY ROAD Y  
OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN

#### **Virtual Access:**

**To join this meeting via Zoom, please click this link.**

**Enter the Meeting ID:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88595102914?pwd=anyZkNZck5oTzNDemk4akl2K1BGUT09>

**Passcode: 885 9510 2914**

**To join this meeting by telephone, dial (312) 626-6799.**

A Business Meeting of the Legislative Committee will be held on March 25, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. at the James P. Coughlin Center, 625 E. County Road Y, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

At this meeting, the following will be presented to the Board for its consideration:

***The Chairman may take up any item on the agenda at any time after the meeting commences.***

**A. Call to Order**

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

**C. Public Comments within the Jurisdiction of the Committee**

**D. Approval of Minutes**

1. Action Item: January 2024 Meeting Minutes

**E. Update from State Legislators**

1. Invited Legislators: Sen. Dan Feyen – District 18; Sen. Rachael Cabral-Guervara – District 19; Rep. Michael Schraa – District 53; Rep. Lori Palmeri – District 54; Rep. Nate Gustafson – District 55; Rep. Rep. Lee Snodgrass – District 57

**F. Update from Federal Representatives**

1. Invited Representatives: Senator Baldwin, Senator Johnson, Congressman Grothman and Congressman Mike Gallagher

**G. Communications Shared by Committee Members**

**H. Updates from the County Executive**

1. New Legislative District Maps

**I. Business Items**

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. Resolution: Discussion/Action - Sawyer County Resolution 2023-27 – "Resolution on Enhanced Wake Regulations"

- This resolution was read in at the December 19, 2023, County Board of Supervisors meeting and referred to the Legislative Committee.
- The Legislative Committee met on January 22, 2024, and they voted to refer this to the Land Conservation Committee.
- The Land Conservation Committee met on March 14, 2024. The committee voted 5-0, to approve the Sawyer County Resolution and refer it back to the Legislative Committee.

**J. Items for Next Agenda (i.e. Resolutions from other Counties)**

Suggestions from committee members for items to be addressed on a future agenda

**K. Next Meeting Date: May 20, 2024?? (Regularly scheduled 4th Monday would have been Monday, May 27, 2024 (Memorial Day))**

**L. Adjourn**

*\*\*A quorum of the Aviation Committee, Highway Committee, Park View Health Center Committee, Planning & Zoning Committee, Personnel & Finance Committee, Information Technology Committee, Parks & Recreation Committee, and the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors may be present at this meeting.*

*Upon request, provisions will be made for people with disabilities upon 24 hours prior notice to the Office of the County Clerk. Phone Number: (920) 232-3430.*

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
Monday, January 22, 2024  
James P. Coughlin Center  
625 E. County Road Y, Oshkosh

Members Present: 14 – Chuck Farrey, Steven Binder, Jim Wise, John Hinz, Brian Defferding, Morris Cox, David Albrecht, Tom Egan, Larry Lautenschlager, Robert Keller, Douglas Nelson, Thomas Snider, Nate Gustafson, and Ralph Harrison.

Absent: 3 – Koby Schellenger, Maribeth Gabert and Karen Powers.

Also Present: Mary Anne Mueller (Corporation Counsel); Conley Hanson (County Board Supervisor); Eric Sparr (District Attorney); State Representatives Nate Gustafson, Michael Schraa and Lori Palmeri; Jennifer Garner representing U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's Office and Alan Ott representing Congressman Glenn Grothman's Office.

Via Zoom: Winnebago County Supervisors Rachael Dowling and Shanah Zastera, Ethan Hollenberger (County Executive Assistant), Doug Gieryn (Public Health Director), and Will Terry representing State Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara's Office.

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Farrey called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Farrey opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Approval of minutes of May 22, 2023, and October 23, 2023, meetings**

Motion by Supervisor Cox and seconded by Supervisor Albrecht to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2023, meeting. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE. (Abstain: Nelson)

Motion by Larry Lautenschlager and seconded by Supervisor Cox to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2023, meeting. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE. (Abstain: Nelson)

**4. Public Comments**

Conley Hanson, County Board Supervisor, spoke in support for agenda item no. 6, Price County Resolution No. 19-23 – "Request the State of Wisconsin to Address Concerns of Act 216, Relating to Distributing the Proceeds from the Sale of Tax Delinquent Property to the Former Owner"; item no. 7, Polk County Resolution No. 27-23 – "Resolution Supporting a Restitution Court Program for Polk County"; and item no. 8, Kenosha County Resolution No. 60 – "A Resolution on the Individual Health Decisions Pertaining to COVID 19 Government Lockdowns, Vaccine, and Mask Mandates".

**5. Correspondence**

No correspondence.

Chairman Farrey announced the following individuals were in attendance today: Supervisor Doug Nelson is the interim Chairman for the Solid Waste Management Board; Supervisor Brian Defferding is the vice-chair for the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee filling in for Chairman Bryan Stafford; and Supervisor Jim Wise is the vice-chair for the Facilities & Property Management Committee filling in for Chairman Andy Buck.

**6. Discussion/Action: Price County Resolution No. 19-23 – "Request the State of Wisconsin to Address Concerns of Act 216, Relating to Distributing the Proceeds from the Sale of Tax Delinquent Property to the Former Owner".**

Motion by Supervisor Binder, seconded by Larry Lautenschlager, to bring discussion to the floor.

Motion by Thomas Snider, seconded by Supervisor Hinz, to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board. FAILED BY VOICE VOTE.

**7. Discussion/Action: Polk County Resolution No. 27-23 – "Resolution Supporting a Restitution Court Program for Polk County".**

Motion by Larry Lautenschlager, seconded by Supervisor Binder, to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE. (Nay: Cox)

**8. Discussion/Action: Kenosha County Resolution No. 60 – "A Resolution on the Individual Health Decisions Pertaining to COVID 19 Government Lockdowns, Vaccine, and Mask Mandates".**

Motion by Supervisor Gustafson, seconded by Supervisor Defferding, to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board.

Vote on Resolution: AYES: 7; NAYES: 6 – Farrey, Wise, Cox, Lautenschlager, Nelson, and Snider; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 3 – Schellenger, Gabert, and Powers. MOTION PASSED.

**9. Discussion/Action: Green Lake County Resolution 23-2023 – "Resolution in opposition to Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau 2023 Bill Proposal LRB-3518/1" and Sawyer County Resolution 2023-27 – "Resolution on Enhanced Wake Regulations".**

Motion by Supervisor Cox to separate and vote on each resolution separately.

**1. Green Lake County Resolution 23-2023 – "Resolution in opposition to Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau 2023 Bill Proposal LRB-3518/1"**

Motion by Supervisor Nelson, seconded by Larry Lautenschlager, to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board.

After further discussion, Motion by Supervisor Nelson, to withdraw his motion and take no action seconded by Larry Lautenschlager. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

**2. Sawyer County Resolution 2023-27 – "Resolution on Enhanced Wake Regulations".**

Motion by Larry Lautenschlager, seconded by Supervisor Nelson, to approve the resolution and forward to the County Board.

Vote on Resolution: AYES: 3 – Farrey, Lautenschlager and Nelson; NAYES: 10; ABSTAIN: 0; ABSENT: 3 – Schellenger, Gabert, and Powers. MOTION FAILED.

Motion by Thomas Snider, seconded by Larry Lautenschlager to refer this to the Land Conservation Committee. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

**10. Discuss proposed State and Federal Legislation from the Legislative Committee members**

None

**11. Update from County Executive Jon Doemel**

County Executive Jon Doemel updated on the following:

- The Strategic Planning Sessions are taking place January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, this week, for the County Board Supervisors and Department Heads. This is an opportunity for these individuals to work with the facilitator and provide input on a strategic plan.
- The agenda prep software, Civic Plus, trials have been going very well, not too many glitches or bugs so far to work out. He is very excited as this software has some great features which will create, publish and distribute materials to the members and the public faster.

**12. Update from State Legislators**

Representative Michael Schraa – District 53:

- The Session is winding down. Mr. Schraa stated any bills that haven't had a hearing probably won't get done unless there's a big push to get them on the floor for a vote.
- Representative Schraa mentioned in the budget, they increased the correctional officers hourly pay for an additional \$13/hour and that has made a great impact. They are attracting individuals into corrections as a career. The only complaints they have received is that they are not getting enough overtime. This issue is going in the right direction.
- Mr. Schraa informed everyone an issue that was brought to their attention with the Wisconsin Resource Center and individuals not getting the proper medications. The current process of cases being transferred to a judge in a different county, requesting an order for medication is not working well. Several cases get dismissed resulting in the individuals not getting the proper medications. They are working with the Wisconsin Counties Association for a solution.
- Representative Schraa discussed the re-districting that is taking place and the new maps that are being drawn up. This will be debated again on 3/15/2024. This will need to be done by April 15, 2024, as that is when they will begin circulating papers to get on the fall ballot. There will be a lot happening in the next month or two.

Representative Lori Palmeri – District 54:

- Representative Palmeri echoed Representative Schraa's comments and added some additional thoughts regarding the change in district maps.

Representative Nate Gustafson – District 55:

- Representative Gustafson commented on his thoughts regarding the re-districting and new maps that have been drawn up.
- Mr. Gustafson updated everyone on the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence (AI). A report is coming out this week with recommendations submitted from the task force that includes forming a committee in the next session.
- Representative Gustafson discussed the Medical Marijuana issue. There is a plan in Wisconsin to introduce some type of medical marijuana, but it is at an early stage and discussions are still taking place.

Supervisor Nelson asked the representatives about the current issue regarding Wisconsin and the possibility of lake sturgeon being added to the endangered species act. This would be a huge economical impact for Wisconsin.

Representative Schraa stated that there will be a press conference today at 1:00 pm. There is also a community information meeting on the future of sturgeon spearing taking place tonight, January 22, 2024, 7:00-8:00 pm, held at the Stockbridge High School Gym. Mr. Schraa expects a very large crowd as there is a lot of concern out there. Federal and State representatives will give an update on efforts underway and what the next steps are in the process. The public will have a chance to voice their concerns and support and ask any questions they may have.

Chairman Farrey thanked the State Representatives for their attendance. It is greatly appreciated.

### **13. Update from Federal Representatives**

Alan Ott, District Director—Congressman Glenn Grothman

- Congressman Grothman and Gallagher will be at the press conference and community meeting as mentioned earlier in the meeting regarding the Sturgeon Spearing issue.
- Mr. Ott discussed the border crisis. It has never been as bad as it is now. The illegal immigration is at an all-time record high. December alone, there were over \$300,000 individuals that crossed the border and 61 of them were from all different countries and not just Mexico and South America.
- The budget situation that passed this past Friday split the budget funding into two different pieces. The next deadline is in February. If they can't come to an agreement, there will be a partial government shut-down.
- Mr. Ott stated that in December, Congressman Grothman introduced the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Direct-Hire Authority Act to provide direct hire authority to the Director of the Bureau of Prisons.
- Congress has not been too involved with the redistricting maps.

Jennifer Garner, District Director—Senator Tammy Baldwin

- Senator Baldwin fully supports the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act. The CVSO Act will expand community-based outreach that will help veterans access services to improve their health and wellness and prevent suicides. Ms. Garner acknowledged that Tom Snider and Joe Aulik were responsible for getting this piece of legislation introduced and it passed unanimously in the Senate. Now, it will go before the House. This is going to help our veterans everywhere in this nation.
- Senator Baldwin was able to include the Fend Off Fentanyl Act which is bi-partisan legislation to combat our crisis. They know they need to take some pretty aggressive measures to stop the flow of fentanyl into our communities.
- Ms. Baldwin also introduced the following pieces of legislation:
  - Stop Fentanyl at the Border Act.
  - Bi-Partisan Safe Response Act
  - Bi-Partisan Re-Entry Act

Winnebago County Sheriff, John Matz, supports both Bi-Partisan Safe Response Act and the Bi-Partisan Re-Entry Act.

- Ms. Garner explained that Senator Baldwin has been involved in many remaining projects but didn't want to take more time to speak on all of them. If anyone is interested or has any questions on any one of them, feel free to contact Ms. Garner or Senator Baldwin's office or visit the website.

### **14. Topics to be discussed at next Legislative Committee Meeting**

- Resolutions from other counties referred from County Board
- Supervisor Nelson will work with Mary Anne Mueller, Corporation Counsel, to draft up a resolution addressing the Sturgeon issue and bring it back to the Legislative Committee.

### **15. Next Meeting Date and Time**

The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 25, 2024, at 8:30 am.

**16. Adjourn**

Motion made and seconded to adjourn. CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.  
The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Submitted by:  
Cassie J. Smith-Gregor  
Winnebago County Deputy Clerk

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**RESOLUTION ON ENHANCED WAKE REGULATIONS**

**WHEREAS:** the lakes of Sawyer County, Wisconsin are integral to the recreational base of the economy in Sawyer County.

**AND WHEREAS:** Legislation has been proposed to regulate wakesurfing and wakeboarding,

**AND WHEREAS:** the legislation as currently written fails to set minimum standards for the protection of private property, public safety and enjoyment, and aquatic environments,

**AND WHEREAS:** several towns in Sawyer County have already set standards that use evidence from aquatic and engineering studies which protect shorelines of lakes in Sawyer County from erosion by these enhanced wakes,

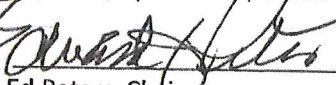
**AND WHEREAS:** the legislation fails to include a standard related to wake depth that would protect water quality in lakes from scouring by enhanced wakes,

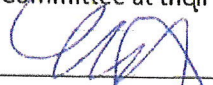
**AND WHEREAS:** The legislation repeats standards already in place in other statutes,

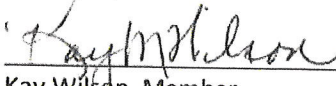
**THEREFORE,** be it resolved that the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors does recommend that the Wisconsin Legislature engage in meaningful discussions to pass standards that balance the right of everyone to recreate on waters of the State of Wisconsin, by affirming that;

Wisconsin's local governments deserve local control to set their own standards beyond state minimums, of at least 700 feet from the shore, and to prohibit enhanced wake creation in waters shallower than at least 30 feet in depth.

Recommended for adoption by the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors at its meeting on November 14, 2023, by the Land, Water and Forest Resources Committee at their November 8, 2023 meeting.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ed Peters, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Marc Helwig, Vice-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kay Wilson, Member


\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Bisonette, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Weaver, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Sheptick, Member

This Resolution is hereby adopted by the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors 14<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tweed Shuman, Sawyer County Board of Supervisors

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lynn Fitch, County Clerk



**Sawyer County Administrator's Office**

10610 Main Street, Suite 23 - Hayward, WI 54843

Phone: 715-638-3245

Email [andy.albarado@sawyercountygov.org](mailto:andy.albarado@sawyercountygov.org)

December 18, 2023

Hello –

Sawyer County has approved the attached Resolution on Enhance Wage Regulations in regards to proposed wakeboarding and wakesurfing legislation that was being discussed and has recently been introduced. There is a set of bills (AB 656/SB 680) that have been assigned to legislative committees that are proposing to establish statewide standards for wakesurfing and wakeboarding.

This legislation is concerning to Sawyer County, as a one-size fits all approach. In addition, a number of Sawyer County towns have already adopted wakesurfing/wakeboarding ordinances with more restrictive regulations. As proposed the legislation would not allow a local government to adopt more restrictive regulations than what the legislation establishes.

We are circulating our Resolution to other Counties, local governments, State Legislators, and the Governor and requesting that there can be meaningful discussions to pass standards that balance the right of everyone to recreate on the waters of the State of Wisconsin, and local governments retain control to set their own standards for wakeboarding and wakesurfing.

We encourage other legislative bodies to consider adopting similar resolutions and communicate those expectations to the State Legislature.

Sincerely,

Andy Albarado  
County Administrator



#2

# Vote Sheet for Legislative Committee

REFERRED BACK TO COMMITTEE  
Meeting Date: 01/22/2024

ITEM BEING VOTED ON: # 9 – Refer to the Land Conservation Committee  
**Sawyer County Resolution 2023-27 – "Resolution on Enhanced Wake Regulations".**

**CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE**

Motion: \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_

Vote		Abstain	Absent	Name	Committee Chairs
YES	NO				
				Albrecht, David (D. Nussbaum)	Highway
				Binder, Steven (K. Powers)	UW Education, Extension & Agriculture
				Buck, Andy (Jim Wise)	Facilities & Property Management
				Cox, Morris J. (B. Ellenberger)	Personnel & Finance
				Farrey, Chuck (J. Gordon)	Land Conservation
				Gabert, Maribeth (K. Schellenger)	Aviation
				Gustafson, Nate (R. Dowling)	Information Technology
				Harrison, Ralph (J. Belville)	Board of Health
				Hinz, John (M. Gabert)	Planning & Zoning
				Keller, Robert (G. Dearborn Jr.)	Industrial Development Board
				Lautenschlager, Larry (R. Harrison)	Human Services Board
				Douglas Nelson (Interim Chair)	Solid Waste Management Board
				Powers, Karen (J. Belville)	Parks & Recreation
				Schellenger, Koby (M. Gabert)	Park View Health Center
				Snider, Thomas (Roy Rogers)	Veterans Service Commission
				Stafford, Bryan (B. Defferding)	Judiciary & Public Safety
				<b>TOTAL OF SIXTEEN (16) VOTING MEMBERS</b>	
				<b>NINE (9) MEMBERS = QUORUM PRESENT</b>	

\_\_\_\_\_ MOTION PASSES / FAILS

**24.5 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**  
The Committee shall be composed of the chair, or the vice chair in the absence of the chair, of the following committees and boards as well as the County Board Chairman:  
The committees listed in Sections 23.1 through 24.4 and 24.6 through 24.12 of these Rules; the Human Services Board; the Board of Health; the Industrial Development Board; the Solid Waste Management Board, and the Veterans Service Commission. The Legislative Committee shall review proposed federal and state legislation and administrative regulations impacting upon the County and shall provide and inform area legislators and Wisconsin Legislative Committees of the recommendations of the County Board. The Committee shall report its actions to the County Board as well as any pertinent information relating to legislation.  
Note: The committees listed in Sections 23.1 through 24.4 and 24.6 through 24.12: UW Education, Extension & Agriculture, Aviation, Facilities & Property Management, Planning & Zoning, Judiciary & Public Safety, Parks & Recreation, Park View Health Center, Personnel & Finance, Highway, Legislative, Land Conservation and Information Technology.

DEFEATED

# Vote Sheet for Legislative Committee

Meeting Date: 01/22/2024

#1

ITEM BEING VOTED ON: # 9 – *To approve resolution and forward to County Board Sawyer County Resolution 2023-27 – "Resolution on Enhanced Wake Regulations".*

Motion: \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_

Vote		Abstain	Absent	Name	Committee Chairs
YES	NO				
	✓			Albrecht, David (D. Nussbaum)	Highway
	✓			Binder, Steven (K. Powers)	UW Education, Extension & Agriculture
	✓			Buck, Andy (Jim Wise)	Facilities & Property Management
	✓			Cox, Morris J. (B. Ellenberger)	Personnel & Finance
✓				Farrey, Chuck (J. Gordon)	Land Conservation
			✓	Gabert, Maribeth (K. Schellenger)	Aviation
	✓			Gustafson, Nate (R. Dowling)	Information Technology
	✓			Harrison, Ralph (J. Belville)	Board of Health
	✓			Hinz, John (M. Gabert)	Planning & Zoning
	✓			Keller, Robert (G. Dearborn Jr.)	Industrial Development Board
✓				Lautenschlager, Larry (R. Harrison)	Human Services Board
✓				Douglas Nelson (Interim Chair)	Solid Waste Management Board
			✓	Powers, Karen (J. Belville)	Parks & Recreation
			✓	Schellenger, Koby (M. Gabert)	Park View Health Center
	✓			Snider, Thomas (Roy Rogers)	Veterans Service Commission
	✓			Stafford, Bryan (B. Defferding)	Judiciary & Public Safety
				<b>TOTAL OF SIXTEEN (16)</b>	
				<b>VOTING MEMBERS</b>	
				<b>NINE (9) MEMBERS = QUORUM</b>	
				<b>PRESENT</b>	

3 10 - 3 MOTION PASSES / FAILS

### 24.5 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

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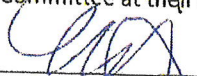
**AND WHEREAS:** The legislation repeats standards already in place in other statutes,

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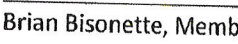
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Recommended for adoption by the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors at its meeting on November 14, 2023, by the Land, Water and Forest Resources Committee at their November 8, 2023 meeting.

  
Ed Peters, Chair

  
Marc Helwig, Vice-Chair

  
Kay Wilson, Member

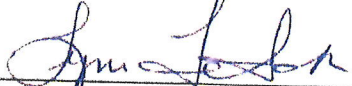
  
Brian Bisonette, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Weaver, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Sheptick, Member

This Resolution is hereby adopted by the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors 14<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023.

  
Tweed Shuman, Sawyer County Board of Supervisors

  
Lynn Fitch, County Clerk



**Sawyer County Administrator's Office**

10610 Main Street, Suite 23 - Hayward, WI 54843

Phone: 715-638-3245

Email [andy.albarado@sawyercountygov.org](mailto:andy.albarado@sawyercountygov.org)

December 18, 2023

Hello –

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This legislation is concerning to Sawyer County, as a one-size fits all approach. In addition, a number of Sawyer County towns have already adopted wakesurfing/wakeboarding ordinances with more restrictive regulations. As proposed the legislation would not allow a local government to adopt more restrictive regulations than what the legislation establishes.

We are circulating our Resolution to other Counties, local governments, State Legislators, and the Governor and requesting that there can be meaningful discussions to pass standards that balance the right of everyone to recreate on the waters of the State of Wisconsin, and local governments retain control to set their own standards for wakeboarding and wakesurfing.

We encourage other legislative bodies to consider adopting similar resolutions and communicate those expectations to the State Legislature.

Sincerely,

Andy Albarado  
County Administrator

# Agenda Item Report



**Winnebago County**  
*The Wave of the Future*

DATE: January 19, 2024  
FROM: County Executive  
RE: Discussion/Action: Green Lake County Resolution 23-2023 – "Resolution in opposition to Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau 2023 Bill Proposal LRB-3518/1" and Sawyer County Resolution 2023-27 – "Resolution on Enhanced Wake Regulations"

## General Description:

To what extent should the state have standard wakeboarding laws.

## Action Requested:

Recommend referral to Land and Water Conservation Department for more research

## Procedural Steps:

Committee of Jurisdiction: Legislative Committee Meeting Date: January 22, 2024

Action taken: \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

County Board: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Background

Across the state, wakeboats have caused great debate in Wisconsin due to the amount of water they displace. Generally, wakeboard boats are designed with ballast systems, V drive, hull design, and wake innovation produces better waves. They are designed to displace more water, creating stronger and bigger wakes. Wake boats mimic small "surf" waves. They are becoming more popular.

Smaller lakes for years have struggled with ski boats, which are designed for longer, flatter wakes.

Legislators from up north have introduced Assembly Bill 656/Senate Bill 680 to regulate wakeboarding to 200 feet from the shore. Winnebago County GIS created a map which outlines these proposed regulations.

State Senator Andre Jacque introduced a more restrictive bill which would require a lake to be 1,500 acres and for wakesurfing to occur 700 feet from the shore or other boaters. This bill has not been given a bill number and does not appear to have an Assembly author.

Lakes at Stake is a group which opposes the legislation. Their [website has several resources](#) on topic.

The Wisconsin Land and Water Association, of which Winnebago County is a member, opposes AB 656 because, "We appreciate efforts to address this topic, but oppose because the bill limits the ability of local governments to set appropriate regulations for unique water bodies." [Other entities who support/oppose the legislation are available at this link.](#)

### **Policy Discussion**

With the exception of Lake Winnebago, the lakes in Winnebago County are relatively shallow and the churn of the lake bottom caused by these boats could be harmful for the ecosystem. While water sports are an important tourism catalyst, so is the fishery. Churning the lake bed could result in lost fish habitat and plant life essential for the lake's ecosystem.

Wakeboats also have large ballast systems which draw in water to add weight to the boat. These ballasts need to be completely emptied in order to minimize the introduction of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). AIS mitigation is costly and has hindered access to lakes and rivers across the state.

Winnebago County staff needs more time to review this issue as it relates to our county and what we can do. The introduced legislation appears to not fit Winnebago County's needs; however, the other legislation also does not fit our needs.

The proposed legislation would preempt Winnebago County or municipalities from more restrictive ordinances. Based on the map produced by county GIS, wakesurfing/boarding would be largely not allowed on the rivers; however, would be ok on the lakes. The shallowness of the upper lakes is a major concern.

### **Attachments:**

1. Green Lake County Resolution
2. Sawyer County Resolution
3. Lakes at Stake Press Release
4. AB 656 Cosponsorship Memo
5. AB 656
6. Sen. Jacque Cosponsorship Memo
7. Sen. Jacque Bill Draft
8. Proposed Prohibited Wakeboard Map



**Contact:**  
Jaimee Minney Maples, Lakes at Stake Wisconsin  
206.390.6637  
superjaimee@gmail.com

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Lakes at Stake Wisconsin Celebrates Vermont's Monumental Efforts to Protect Lakes from Wake Boat Damage

### **New rules will substantially improve lake ecology, state tourism, and safety**

**Madison—January 8, 2024**—Vermont released the nation's most comprehensive regulations on wake-enhanced sports. The new rules, which are anticipated to be in effect for the 2024 boating season, stipulate that: enhanced wake sports must be 500 feet from shore, in no less than 20 feet of water, and only on lakes where the state has mapped a minimum 50-acre zone designated for the activity. In addition, wake boats must be registered to operate on a specific lake and are required to undergo professional decontamination of their ballast tanks before operating on another lake, in order to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Lakes at Stake Wisconsin, a bipartisan grassroots organization committed to protecting Wisconsin lakes from the impacts caused by wake-enhanced boating, announced its enthusiastic support for the new Vermont rules with the following statement from the association's president, Paul Gardetto.

"Vermont took action to protect its lakes, which greatly assists its tourism and Vermont's economy by making sure its lakes will be pristine for generations. We are hopeful that Wisconsin will pursue a similar path.

We commend Vermont for rightly identifying that boats operating in wake-enhanced mode are a serious threat to lakes and recognize that these actions inflict shoreline damage, decimation of lake bottoms, risk boater safety, and hurt efforts to address aquatic invasive species. Establishing reasonable restrictions on wake-enhanced boating protects tourism, fishing, and the safe enjoyment for all who use our state's lakes and rivers."

The Wisconsin Legislature is currently considering Assembly Bill 656/ Senate Bill 680 that would allow wake-enhanced boating on any lake greater than 50 acres, so long as the activity occurs no less than 200 feet from shore. Lakes at Stakes Wisconsin opposes the bill in its current form, which it says lacks adequate safeguards for lakes and those who enjoy them. Lakes at Stake is lobbying legislators for more meaningful reforms to protect Wisconsin's lakes and rivers.

For more information about Lakes at Stake and its position, please visit [www.lakesatstake.org](http://www.lakesatstake.org).

###

## CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Legislators

**FROM:** Representative Swearingen & Senator Felzkowski

**DATE:** Thursday, October 19, 2023

**RE:** Co-sponsorship of LRB 3518/1- relating to: the regulation of wakesurfing and wakeboarding.

**DEADLINE:** Thursday, October 26, 2023

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In the picturesque counties of Vilas and Oneida, we are privileged to be home to 2,447 lakes, representing the highest concentration of any region in Wisconsin. These water bodies not only serve as a source of recreation and beauty, but also play an essential role in our tourism industry and local economies.

In recent years, we have seen a significant surge in the popularity of water sports such as wakesurfing and wakeboarding. While these activities add to our state's vibrant recreational tapestry, there are pressing safety and conservation concerns that we must address. Evidenced by public input, there is a unanimous understanding that while we embrace these sports, regulations are necessary to create a statewide standard that is amenable for those using and patrolling our waterways.

This bill intends to provide a well-measured response to these concerns. By establishing clear regulations founded in peer reviewed research, we can ensure the safe growth of wake sports and simultaneously safeguard our lakes from preventable environmental damage.

### **Key Provisions of the Bill:**

**Definitions:** Clearly defining wakesurfing and wakeboarding to remove any ambiguities in interpretation.

**Regulation Parity:** Aligning wake sport regulations with existing guidelines for other aquaplaning activities.

**Water Body Restrictions:** Prohibiting wake sports on bodies of water that are less than 50 acres.



**Proximity to Shorelines and Structures:** Restricting wake sport activities within 200 feet of a shoreline or any water-based structure to minimize potential issues.

Importantly, this is not a step into uncharted waters. Four states - Tennessee and South Carolina in 2017, followed by Georgia and Alabama this year - have successfully implemented similar legislation. Their positive outcomes offer a model for the benefits we can anticipate in Wisconsin.

In the spirit of collaboration, and with our shared goal of preserving the beauty and safety of our waterways, we kindly request your support for this bill. Together, we can find the balance between recreation and conservation, ensuring that the lakes of Vilas and Oneida, and all of Wisconsin, remain pristine for generations to come, while simultaneously allowing watersports the opportunity to recreate on our lakes.

**If you are interested in co-sponsoring this legislation, please reply to this e-mail or contact Representative Swearingen's office at 9134 or Senator Felzkowski's office at 6-2509 by Wednesday, October 25 at 12:00 PM. Co-sponsors will be added to both the Assembly and Senate versions of the bill unless specified otherwise.**

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***Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau***

This bill regulates wakesurfing and wakeboarding. The bill defines wakesurfing as surfing a motorboat's wake, regardless of whether the person is being pulled by a tow rope attached to the motorboat that is producing the wake or operating a motorboat in a manner that creates a wake that is, or is intended to be, surfed by another person. The bill defines wakeboarding as being towed on a board with or without foot bindings by a motorboat across the vessel's wake or operating a motorboat in a manner that creates a wake while towing a person on a board with or without foot bindings.

Under current law, various regulations apply to water skiing, aquaplaning, "or similar activity," and under current law, wakesurfing and wakeboarding likely fall under "aquaplaning" or "similar activity." The bill explicitly provides that "aquaplaning" includes wakesurfing and wakeboarding, and thereby applies the same safety regulations that apply to water skiing and aquaplaning to wakesurfing and wakeboarding. These regulations include requiring an observer or a wide-angle mirror on the motorboat, restricting wakesurfing and wakeboarding to between sunrise and sunset, prohibiting intoxicated wakesurfing and wakeboarding, requiring a motorboat

used for wakesurfing or wakeboarding to stay more than 100 feet away from any occupied anchored boat, personal watercraft, or marked swimming area or public boat landing, and prohibiting a person engaged in wakesurfing or wakeboarding from being within 100 feet, or allowing a tow rope to be within 100 feet, of a personal watercraft.

The bill also adds restrictions that apply specifically to wakeboarding and wakesurfing. Current law prohibits the operation of a motorboat on a lake open to public access that is 50 acres or less. The bill prohibits wakesurfing and wakeboarding on a body of water of 50 acres or less or that is less than 400 feet wide, regardless of public access. The bill prohibits wakesurfing or wakeboarding within 200 feet of a shoreline or dock, pier, boathouse, or other structure located completely or partly on the water, though the bill allows a local ordinance to be less strict, but not more strict, than this prohibition. The bill also requires that a person surfing a wake or being towed on a board must wear a personal flotation device.

The bill applies the same penalties to wakesurfing and wakeboarding violations that apply to water skiing violations under current law.



State of Wisconsin  
2023 - 2024 LEGISLATURE

LRB-3518/1  
EHS:skw

## 2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 656

November 9, 2023 - Introduced by Representatives SWEARINGEN, PLUMER, SINICKI, SNODGRASS, SPIROS, WITKE and DALLMAN, cosponsored by Senators FELZKOWSKI, NASS, ROYS and TESTIN. Referred to Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

1 AN ACT *to amend* 30.69 (3) (d); and *to create* 30.01 (1ag), 30.01 (1ah), 30.50 (13r),  
2 30.50 (13v) and 30.69 (3) (cm) of the statutes; **relating to:** the regulation of  
3 wakesurfing and wakeboarding.

---

*Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill regulates wakesurfing and wakeboarding. The bill defines wakesurfing as surfing a motorboat's wake, regardless of whether the person is being pulled by a tow rope attached to the motorboat that is producing the wake or operating a motorboat in a manner that creates a wake that is, or is intended to be, surfed by another person. The bill defines wakeboarding as being towed on a board with or without foot bindings by a motorboat across the vessel's wake or operating a motorboat in a manner that creates a wake while towing a person on a board with or without foot bindings.

Under current law, various regulations apply to water skiing, aquaplaning, "or similar activity," and under current law, wakesurfing and wakeboarding likely fall under "aquaplaning" or "similar activity." The bill explicitly provides that "aquaplaning" includes wakesurfing and wakeboarding, and thereby applies the same safety regulations that apply to water skiing and aquaplaning to wakesurfing and wakeboarding. These regulations include requiring an observer or a wide-angle mirror on the motorboat, restricting wakesurfing and wakeboarding to between sunrise and sunset, prohibiting intoxicated wakesurfing and wakeboarding, requiring a motorboat used for wakesurfing or wakeboarding to stay more than 100 feet away from any occupied anchored boat, personal watercraft, or marked

**ASSEMBLY BILL 656**

swimming area or public boat landing, and prohibiting a person engaged in wakesurfing or wakeboarding from being within 100 feet, or allowing a tow rope to be within 100 feet, of a personal watercraft.

The bill also adds restrictions that apply specifically to wakeboarding and wakesurfing. Current law prohibits the operation of a motorboat on a lake open to public access that is 50 acres or less. The bill prohibits wakesurfing and wakeboarding on a body of water of 50 acres or less or that is less than 400 feet wide, regardless of public access. The bill prohibits wakesurfing or wakeboarding within 200 feet of a shoreline or dock, pier, boathouse, or other structure located completely or partly on the water, though the bill allows a local ordinance to be less strict, but not more strict, than this prohibition. The bill also requires that a person surfing a wake or being towed on a board must wear a personal flotation device.

The bill applies the same penalties to wakesurfing and wakeboarding violations that apply to water skiing violations under current law.

*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

1           **SECTION 1.** 30.01 (1ag) of the statutes is created to read:

2           30.01 (1ag) "Aquaplaning" includes wakesurfing and wakeboarding.

3           **SECTION 2.** 30.01 (1ah) of the statutes is created to read:

4           30.01 (1ah) "Aquaplane" includes the board upon which a person rides while  
5 wakesurfing or wakeboarding.

6           **SECTION 3.** 30.50 (13r) of the statutes is created to read:

7           30.50 (13r) "Wakeboarding" means the activity of any of the following:

8           (a) Being towed on a board with or without foot bindings by a motorboat across  
9 the motorboat's wake.

10          (b) Operating a motorboat in a manner that creates a wake while towing a  
11 person on a board with or without foot bindings.

12          **SECTION 4.** 30.50 (13v) of the statutes is created to read:

13          30.50 (13v) "Wakesurfing" means the activity of any of the following:

## ASSEMBLY BILL 656

## SECTION 4

1 (a) Surfing a motorboat's wake, regardless of whether the person is being pulled  
2 by a tow rope attached to the motorboat that is producing the wake.

3 (b) Operating a motorboat in a manner that creates a wake that is, or is  
4 intended to be, surfed by a person.

5 **SECTION 5.** 30.69 (3) (cm) of the statutes is created to read:

6 30.69 (3) (cm) 1. Except as provided in subd. 2., no person may engage in  
7 wakesurfing or wakeboarding in any of the following circumstances:

8 a. On a body of water that is 50 acres or less.

9 b. On a portion of a body of water with a width, measured from the nearest  
10 shoreline to the second nearest shoreline, of less than 400 feet.

11 c. Subject to subd. 3., within 200 feet of a shoreline or a dock, pier, boathouse,  
12 or other structure located completely or partly on the body of water.

13 d. When surfing a wake or being towed on a board without wearing a personal  
14 flotation device prescribed by federal regulations.

15 2. Subdivision 1. does not apply to duly authorized wakeboarding or  
16 wakesurfing tournaments, competitions, exhibitions, or trials therefor, where  
17 adequate lighting is provided.

18 3. In an ordinance enacted under s. 30.77, a city, village, town, public inland  
19 lake protection and rehabilitation district, or town sanitary district may not be more  
20 restrictive than the prohibition in subd. 1. c. but may provide an exemption from the  
21 prohibition in subd. 1. c. or substitute a lesser number of feet.

22 **SECTION 6.** 30.69 (3) (d) of the statutes is amended to read:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 656**

**SECTION 6**

1           30.69 (3) (d) Paragraphs (a) to ~~(e)~~ (cm) do not apply to pickup or drop areas that  
 2           are marked with regulatory markers and that are open to operators of personal  
 3           watercraft and to persons and motorboats engaged in water skiing or similar activity.

(END)

**CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM**

**TO: All Legislators**

**FROM: Sen. André Jacque**

**DATE: November 30, 2023**

**RE: Co-Sponsorship of LRB 5069/1, Wisconsin Conservation Congress Wake Boat Lake Protection Standards**

**DEADLINE: Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 5:00 pm**

One of the most significant concerns for the environmental, economic and recreational vitality of our freshwater lakes in the Great Lakes basin has been the intensification in impacts from wake boats on bodies of water that are too small to safely accommodate their use. While fun and largely safe for use on larger lakes, wake boats involve massive water displacement for the generation of very large, hazardous wakes for surfing and wakeboarding that can pose a significant danger to other water users in their vicinity.

Wake boats operate with the bow up and stern down, causing forward visibility concerns and scouring the bottom of lakes with depths of 20 feet or more, as well as damaging and eroding the shoreline on smaller lakes through frequent passes. This churning of the lakebed also creates turbidity that can destroy aquatic plants and fish spawning beds. One of the most significant concerns with wake boats is that because of their extremely large ballast tanks that are unable to fully drain, they can transfer aquatic invasive species such as zebra mussels, quagga mussels and spiny water fleas to disastrous effect.

To address these concerns while allowing for continued use of wake boats on more than a dozen of Wisconsin's largest lakes which they suited for, I will be introducing legislation requested by numerous sporting and conservation groups that was overwhelmingly recommended earlier this year during the Conservation Congress advisory questions as part of the 2023 WI DNR Spring hearings. LRB 5069/1 combines questions #63 and #64, which each passed a vote of thousands of Wisconsin residents with over two-thirds support. Those responses, and this legislation, specifically call for prohibiting wake boats from causing hazardous wakes on lakes less than 1,500 acres, and requiring wake boats causing hazardous wakes on lakes larger than 1,500 acres to be more than 700 feet from shore or other water users.

**To be added as a co-sponsor of this legislation, please reply to this email or contact Sen. Jacque's office at 6-3512 by 5:00 pm on Thursday, December 14, 2023.**

*Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill restricts the operation of a motorboat causing a hazardous wake, which the bill defines as a boat wake the height of which is intentionally amplified through the use of ballast, boat design features, or operational procedures. The bill prohibits such operation on a lake smaller than 1,500 acres, and less than 700 feet from the shoreline or from any boat, swimmer, or other water user on a lake that is 1,500 acres or larger.





## 2023 BILL

1 AN ACT *to create* 30.68 (4) (c) of the statutes; relating to: the operation of a  
2 motorboat causing a hazardous wake.

---

### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill restricts the operation of a motorboat causing a hazardous wake, which the bill defines as a boat wake the height of which is intentionally amplified through the use of ballast, boat design features, or operational procedures. The bill prohibits such operation on a lake smaller than 1,500 acres, and less than 700 feet from the shoreline or from any boat, swimmer, or other water user on a lake that is 1,500 acres or larger.

---

*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

3 SECTION 1. 30.68 (4) (c) of the statutes is created to read:

4 30.68 (4) (c) 1. In this paragraph, "hazardous wake" means a boat wake the  
5 height of which is intentionally amplified through the use of ballast, boat design  
6 features, or operational procedures.

7 2. On a lake that is smaller than 1,500 acres, no person may operate a  
8 motorboat causing a hazardous wake.

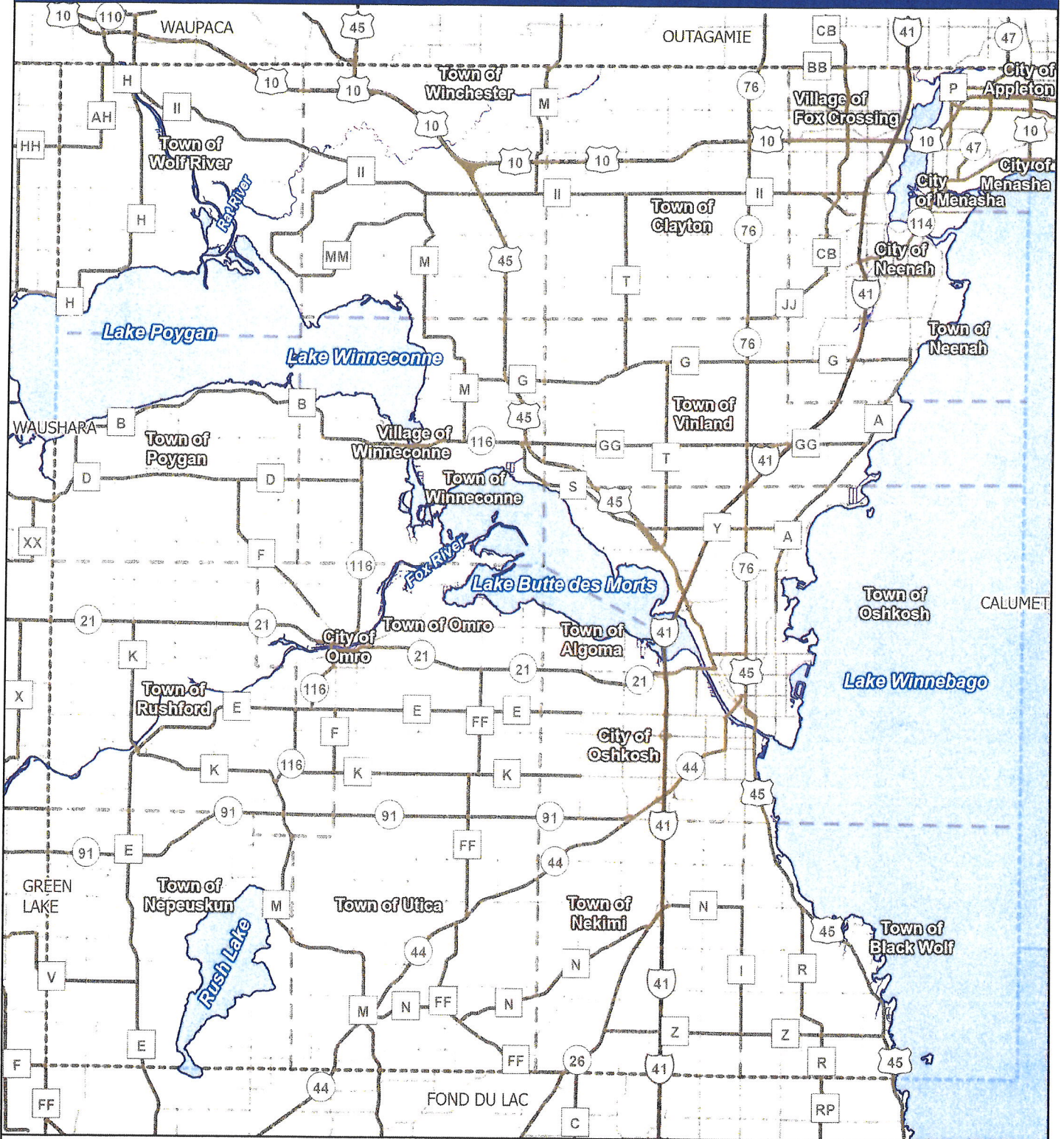
**BILL**

1           3. On a lake that is 1,500 acres or larger, no person may operate a motorboat  
2 causing a hazardous wake less than 700 feet from the shoreline or from any boat,  
3 swimmer, or other individual using the water.

4

(END)

# Proposed Prohibited Wakeboard Area



**Winnebago County**

1/19/2024 7:59 AM

City Village Boundary  
Town Boundary

Estimated Prohibited Wakeboard Area  
Waterways

The proposed prohibited wakeboard area was estimated with a 200 foot buffer from the shoreline and break walls. 2023 Assembly Bill 656.

**WINGS Disclaimer:** This data was created for use by the Winnebago County Geographic Information System project. Any other use/application of this information is the responsibility of the user and such use/application is at their own risk. Winnebago County disclaims all liability regarding fitness of the information for any use other than Winnebago County business.



0 15,000 30,000 feet

1 inch = 17,000 feet

**From:** Michael Arrowood

**Sent:** Monday, February 19, 2024 8:27 PM

**To:** Scott Strook; Bob Knorr; 'Larry Golhke'; Harold Drake; Dale Maas; Dave Ninneman; Harry Bowey.Jr; Steven Ninneman; Doug Seidl; Justin Loehrke; manager@wolfriverresorts.com; Matt McHugh; Arlyn Splitt; Michael Arrowood; Wright Allen; Jason Shelley; Scott Bestul; Butch Koch; Katie James; Mike Kohl; Theresa Klawitter; Todd Cook; fred Wollenburg; Bob Haase

**Subject:** Fw: wake boat update

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**From:** Randy Ritchie <walleyesandbucks@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Friday, February 16, 2024 4:26 PM

**To:** Mike Arrowood <cnma4848@hotmail.com>

**Subject:** wake boat update

Today the State of Vermont formally approved their wakeboat regulations. They go into effect this boating season.

They are:

- 1) Wakeboating (i.e. using ballast and/or plowing allowed only on 30 designated lakes)
- 2) Wake sports on those 30 lakes must be in a pre-designated zone or box that is at least 500 feet from shore and in 20 foot or greater depths
- 3) Wake sports banned on 770 lakes in Vermont deemed either too small or not having at least a 50-acre box that is 500 feet from shore/20 foot depth
- 4) If you move your wakeboat to a different lake, you need to have the ballast tanks professionally cleaned, to clear any AIS that might be in them

As part of these regs, the State was required to do an economic analysis. They added up the costs of not regulating, versus the costs of losing tourism to wake boaters and also sale of the boats. The report said the positive impact of the regulations was 10 to 1 against not doing anything.

Same analysis would apply in Wisconsin. The fishing industry here is a \$2 billion behemoth. We're a sleeping giant. If we awoke, the wake sports would be in serious trouble.

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