



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

January 8, 2024

The Honorable Andrew Renzullo
Chairman, House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1301 – AN ACT relative to wake surfing on public bodies of water

Dear Chairman Renzullo and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1301. This bill proposes to process for petitioning the Department of Safety under RSA 270-D:3-a to prohibit wakesurfing on certain waterbodies. The Department takes no position on this bill, but provides the following information for the committee's consideration.

Wake surfing has become incredibly popular on New Hampshire's surface waters. Should the committee decide to regulate wake surfing, NHDES suggests defining the activity rather than the watercraft when considering proposals regarding the waters where these sports can occur. Additionally, NHDES, through its experience on the 2020 Wake Boat Commission, concurs with the findings raised in the report; namely, that there exists the potential for environmental damage associated with these sports; such as, shoreline erosion. Currently, all boats going greater than headway speed must keep at least 150 feet from the shore.

The proposed legislation would establish a public petition process for consideration of restricting wake surfing on certain public waterbodies taking into account impacts on the environment, area of the waterbody, and the uses which have been established on the specific waterbody under consideration. NHDES notes that several recent studies have specifically focused on the consideration of buffer distances and water depth when establishing the waterbodies or zones within a waterbody where wakesurfing can occur without increased risks to environmental impacts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 1301. Should you have questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact Dave Neils, Limnology Center Director, at 603-271-8865 or david.neils@des.nh.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

ec: Sponsors of HB 1301: Representatives Darby, Tanner, and Vail.