

DRAFT – Revised 01-24-23

Resolution of North Central Land & Water Conservation Association (NCLWCA)

REGULATION RELATED TO HAZARDOUS BOAT WAKES

WHEREAS, Wisconsin’s inland lakes are among the state’s most critical natural resources and have incalculable aesthetic, environmental and economic value, and;

WHEREAS, our lakes face a number of threats to water quality, ecosystem integrity and scenic values, and;

WHEREAS, wakesurfing behind ballasted boats designed and/or outfitted to create wakes that are larger, more powerful, and take longer to attenuate than other boats represent arguably the fastest-growing motorized water sports, and;

WHEREAS, boat manufacturers continue to build bigger and more powerful vessels designed to create larger wakes, and;

WHEREAS, participants in water sports that rely on large wakes render disproportionately large areas of the waterbody temporarily unusable by many other users including kayakers, paddleboarders, canoers, and swimmers, and;

WHEREAS, the adverse impacts of enhanced wakes affecting public safety, water quality, and fish & wildlife habitat include but are not limited to:

- Erosion of developed and natural shorelines
- Hazards for people enjoying activities such as fishing, kayaking, and paddleboarding
- Damage to piers and moored boats
- Transport of invasive species such as spiny water flea and zebra mussels from one lake to another, as ballast tanks cannot be completely emptied
- Disturbance of wildlife habitat and potentially irreversible harm to aquatic ecosystems
- Disturbance of lake bottoms and resuspension of phosphorus and sediment
- Destruction of native aquatic plants and spreading of nuisance invasive plants, and;

WHEREAS, current Wisconsin boating regulations do not account for the special concerns posed by enhanced wakes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that NCLWCA believes regulations should be based on current peer-reviewed science and limit where enhanced wakes are permissible based on size and configuration of lakes; distances from shore, boats, and other obstacles; and depths of water. This can be accomplished by amending 30.66, 30.68, and 30.635 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NCLWCA supports enforcement of existing Wisconsin Administrative Code requiring complete drainage of ballast and other water from boats and equipment to prevent the transport of invasive species including NR 19.055 and NR 40.07.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NCLWCA supports responsible measures to mitigate the impact of hazardous wakes by regulating wakes from ballasted and non-ballasted boats where appropriate, and encourage Wisconsin legislators to take action in this manner to protect surface waters of the state from being adversely impacted.

Adopted this ____ day of (month), 2023