

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

SUPPORT L.D. 379

“An Act to Responsibly Regulate Recreational Boats on Maine Lakes”

SPONSORED BY: Representative Landry of Farmington

DATE OF HEARING: March 22, 2023

Good morning Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Tim Peabody, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support **L.D. 379**.

This bill was originally a concept draft but has been amended. The amendment is a resolve directing our commissioner to study the effects of wake boats and their impact on shoreline property. It also requires the Commissioner to report back to the committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife no later than January 15, 2024.

The Department supports the focus of the resolve as interest in wakeboarding in Maine is increasing and gathering information now can help with policy making going forward. At the moment most of the wake boating activity is limited to southern, and parts of central Maine.

That said, the Department requests that the “study” be limited to gathering and consolidating/summarizing information and studies that are already available in Maine and across the United States. For example, in 2020 the State of New Hampshire published a *“Final Report of the Commission to Study Wake Boats”*, this report was the result of a stakeholder group that was enacted in New Hampshire law in 2019. In 2022 the University of Minnesota conducted a study on wake boat use. Additionally, The National Association of Boating Law Administrators has information related to wake boarding and other towed watersports.

The Department feels that a comprehensive new study of all aspects of this activity would be time consuming, costly, and not provide value to what is already available.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.