



2025 SENATE BILL 1024

February 12, 2026 - Introduced by Senators CABRAL-GUEVARA and JACQUE, cosponsored by Representatives GUSTAFSON and GOEBEN. Referred to Committee on Transportation and Local Government.

1 **AN ACT to create** 30.01 (6w), 30.695, 30.77 (3) (cr) 5. and 30.77 (5) of the
2 statutes; **relating to:** the regulation of wake-enhanced boating; ordinances
3 restricting wake-enhanced boating; and civil immunity for local regulation of
4 wake-enhanced boating.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill imposes restrictions on the conduct of wake-enhanced boating specifies the authority of municipalities to regulate wake-enhanced boating. Under the bill, wake-enhanced boating is the operation of a motorboat in a manner that intentionally creates or enhances a wake for the purpose of wakesurfing, wakeboarding, or similar activities, including through the use of ballast tanks, wave-shaping devices, fins, or other mechanisms that displace water to increase wake size.

Under the bill, no person may conduct wake-enhanced boating on the waters of this state unless certain conditions are met at all times while the wake-enhanced boating is being conducted. Specifically, those conditions are that the wake-enhanced boating is conducted at least 500 feet away from the shoreline and in water with a depth of at least 20 feet. The bill specifies that these restrictions do not preempt or otherwise affect in any way the authority of a local governmental unit to enact more restrictive regulations of wake-enhanced boating.

Current law regulates the operation of boats, but allows a town, village, city, or

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public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district (municipality) to adopt ordinances that regulate boating under certain circumstances. This bill adds to the types of boating ordinances municipalities may adopt restrictions on wake-enhanced boating, including prohibitions on wake-enhanced boating in specified areas; minimum distances from shore, structures, or other boats; minimum water depths; time-of-day restrictions; or complete prohibitions on certain bodies of water.

The bill grants civil immunity to the state, any governmental subdivision or agency of the state, and any officer, official, agent, or employee of those entities that, in good faith, enacts, adopts, or enforces a boating ordinance that imposes restrictions on wake-enhanced boating that are more restrictive than those under state law.

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

1 **SECTION 1.** 30.01 (6w) of the statutes is created to read:

2 30.01 (6w) “Wake-enhanced boating” means the operation of a motorboat in a
3 manner that intentionally creates or enhances a wake for the purpose of
4 wakesurfing, wakeboarding, or similar activities, including through the use of
5 ballast tanks, ballast bags, wave-shaping devices, fins, or other mechanisms that
6 displace or redirect water to increase wake size.

7 **SECTION 2.** 30.695 of the statutes is created to read:

8 **30.695 Wake-enhanced boating.** (1) RESTRICTION. No person may conduct
9 wake-enhanced boating on the waters of this state unless all of the following
10 conditions are met at all times while the wake-enhanced boating is conducted:

11 (a) The wake-enhanced boating is conducted at least 500 feet away from the
12 shoreline.

13 (b) The wake-enhanced boating is conducted in water with a depth of at least
14 20 feet.

15 (2) CERTAIN OPERATIONS EXCLUDED. This section does not restrict the use of

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1 water skis or an aquaplane, tube, or similar device if towed by a motorboat that is
2 not using a partially or fully engaged wake-enhancing feature.

3 (3) LOCAL REGULATION OF BOATING UNAFFECTED. This section does not
4 preempt or otherwise affect in any way the authority of a local governmental unit to
5 enact more restrictive regulation of wake-enhanced boating under s. 30.77.

6 **SECTION 3.** 30.77 (3) (cr) 5. of the statutes is created to read:

7 30.77 (3) (cr) 5. Restrictions on wake-enhanced boating, including
8 prohibitions on wake-enhanced boating in specified areas; minimum distances from
9 shore, structures, or other boats; minimum water depths; time-of-day restrictions;
10 and complete prohibitions on certain or all bodies of water.

11 **SECTION 4.** 30.77 (5) of the statutes is created to read:

12 30.77 (5) CIVIL IMMUNITY FOR LOCAL REGULATION OF WAKE-ENHANCED
13 BOATING. No suit may be brought against the state or any governmental
14 subdivision or agency thereof or against any officer, official, agent, or employee of
15 any of those entities that, in good faith, enacts, adopts, or enforces an ordinance
16 under this section that imposes restrictions on wake-enhanced boating that are
17 more restrictive than those provided under this chapter or rules promulgated by the
18 department. Immunity under this subsection does not alter or limit any other
19 immunity available under law.

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(END)