



TERRY MOULTON



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

23RD SENATE DISTRICT

From: Senator Terry Moulton
To: Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage Mining and Forestry
Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 69
Restrictions to persons operating a motorboat towing a person on water skis
Date: March 9, 2017

Since 1960, residents and visitors in Minnesota, the birthplace of water skiing, have been able to water ski without a spotter onboard when a boat is equipped with a wide-angle rear-view mirror. This bill is modeled after that 57-year-old law and would repeal the requirement for a spotter when a boat is has a wide-angle rear-facing mirror.

When this change was first brought to me by water skiers in my district, I had some initial questions about safety, but after looking deeper into the issue, I'm convinced that this is a safe and practical change that has the potential to benefit both residents and visitors to our lakes and rivers. Last year, the Senate agreed with me and passed this bill unanimously on a voice vote.

In 2015, Minnesota had 185,000 more registered motorboats than Wisconsin, yet Minnesota had only eight skier-involved incidents compared to Wisconsin's eleven. In fact, over the past 6 years, Minnesota has had 28% fewer skier-involved incidents per 100,000 registered boats than Wisconsin.

While waterskiing is often a family sport, many visitors and residents, particularly empty nesters and retirees, have trouble finding a third person to join them, especially if they want to ski at off-peak times when lakes are less crowded. According to the Department of Tourism, of all those who traveled to Wisconsin in 2015 for vacation (not visiting family, friends, or on business), 76% had two or fewer adults in their party. Under current law, these parties would be unable to waterski during their visit to Wisconsin without a third person. This bill would allow for more people to participate in recreational watersports on our lakes - especially residents and tourists who enjoy our lakes with just one other person. It would also give more folks the option to ski at off-peak times, alleviating afternoon crowding on Wisconsin lakes.

Please consider supporting the passage of Senate Bill 69. Thank you again for allowing me to testify today.

Serving the 23rd Senate District



ADAM JARCHOW

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 28TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 69 – Relating to operating a motorboat towing a person on water skis

Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry

Thursday, March 9, 2017 – 9:00 am

400 SE – State Capitol

This bill would exempt motorboats equipped with a wide-view rear-facing mirror from having an on-board observer (spotter) while towing a person on waterskies, wakeboards, or tubes. Currently, Wisconsin law states that three people are required for recreational watersports that involve towing: the skier, the boat operator, and a spotter. This bill eliminates the requirement of having a spotter on board the boat while towing a person as long as the boat is equipped with a mirror.

Minnesota currently does not require a spotter to be present on a boat. In the summer, my district sees thousands of Minnesota residents come to their Wisconsin lake homes enjoying their vacations and spending millions in tourism dollars. The economy of Western Wisconsin relies on Minnesota residents coming across the river and using our beautiful lakes. Making this change ensures that if only two people are visiting, they are still able to enjoy water activities on Wisconsin lakes.

I have also heard from many constituents who are excited by this possible change in state law. People in my area spend their entire summer on the water and they believe that this bill is common sense and long overdue.

I encourage you to join me and Senator Moulton and support this bill.