



2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 1171

March 22, 2024 - Introduced by Representatives SWEARINGEN, BEHNKE, BODDEN, CALLAHAN, MICHALSKI, MURSAU, SINICKI, SNODGRASS, SORTWELL, TITTL, GREEN and EDMING, cosponsored by Senators FELZKOWSKI, COWLES, FEYEN and SPREITZER. Referred to Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

1 **AN ACT relating to:** a wakeboat study at the University of Wisconsin System.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires the University of Wisconsin System, in submitting information to the governor for the purposes of the 2025-27 biennial budget, to submit a plan for conducting a wakeboat study and request funding for conducting the wakeboat study in the 2025-27 fiscal biennium. The bill requires the study to be planned to measure wave energy from representative wakeboats engaged in wake surfing and wake boarding activities in typical wake-enhanced mode and at various distances, study the impact of enhanced wakes on lake bottoms, fish nesting, aquatic vegetation, and sediment disruption, and assess the wave energy of waves generated by winds and storms compared to the energy of waves generated by enhanced wakes.

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

2 **SECTION 1. Nonstatutory provisions.**

3 (1) FUNDING REQUEST FOR WAKEBOAT STUDY.

4 (a) Notwithstanding s. 16.42 (1) (e), in submitting information under s. 16.42
5 for purposes of the 2025-27 biennial budget bill, the University of Wisconsin System

ASSEMBLY BILL 1171**SECTION 1**

1 shall submit a plan for conducting a wakeboat study and request funding for
2 conducting the wakeboat study in the 2025-27 fiscal biennium.

3 (b) The study under par. (a) shall be planned to do all of the following:

4 1. Be conducted with the boats described in subd. 4. on representative inland
5 lake bodies of water in this state.

6 2. Be conducted with the best available technology, including sensors,
7 underwater cameras, and overhead video shot with drones.

8 3. Study and measure wave energy from representative wakeboats engaged in
9 wake surfing and wake boarding activities in typical wake enhanced mode, both with
10 maximum ballast and wake shaping equipment and without ballast. The study and
11 measure of wave energy under this subdivision shall incorporate a test of at least two
12 different 2023-year or later wakeboat models, one of which shall be a typical boat
13 with engines with, at minimum, 400 horsepower and a total boat weight of 10,000
14 pounds or more, including the weight owing to ballast, and one of which shall be a
15 boat with engines with, at minimum, 600 horsepower and that represents the
16 maximum size wakeboat sold for use on inland waters in this state as measured by
17 the boat's total weight, including the weight owing to full ballast.

18 4. Study wave energy of the enhanced wake from wakeboats measured against
19 other non-wake-enhanced boats commonly used on inland lakes in this state,
20 including in the study a representative ski boat, a representative pontoon boat, a
21 20-foot or longer representative fishing boat with minimum 200 horsepower
22 outboard motor, and if available, a cabin boat with inboard engine and length of 27
23 feet or longer. The goal of the study shall be comparing wave size and energy from
24 wake-enhanced boats to similar sized boats on lakes and rivers in this state that are

ASSEMBLY BILL 1171

1 used for recreation, fishing and pleasure boating. The study of wave energy under
2 this paragraph shall also do all of the following:

3 a. Measure the energy and height of waves generated by the boats described
4 this subdivision at distances of 100, 200, 500, 700 and 1,000 feet from shorelines. The
5 study shall determine at what distances a wake-enhanced boat must be from shore
6 for both the energy and wave height to equal the same energy and wave height as
7 non-wake-enhanced boats at 200 foot distances from shore.

8 b. Include an analysis of the impact of wake-enhanced waves at distances of
9 100, 200, and 500 feet from other boaters, kayakers, paddleboarders, fishing boats,
10 sailboats, and other water users, with the goal of understanding whether
11 wake-enhanced waves present additional safety challenges to lake users compared
12 to other non-wake-enhanced boats.

13 5. Study the impact of enhanced wakes on lake bottoms, fish nesting, aquatic
14 vegetation, and sediment disruption, and measure energy and video comparisons of
15 wake-enhanced versus non-wake-enhanced boats in water depths of 10, 15, and 20
16 feet. The study of lake bottoms shall include all of the following:

17 a. Measure of downward prop wash created by a boat in wake surf mode
18 compared to other boats.

19 b. Measure of divergent wave impact on lake bottom.

20 c. Analysis of the impacts, if any, to lake littoral zones resulting from wave
21 energy as wake-enhanced waves reach the shoreline.

22 d. Determination of the amount of energy a typical lake bottom in this state
23 absorbs as waves move from deep to shallow waters over distances of 500 and 700
24 feet.

