

Vermont DEC Releases Draft Rule for Wake Boat Regulation

PRESS RELEASE

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Montpelier, VT – The Lakes and Ponds Program of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) continues to draft a rule that would, if enacted, regulate wake boats on certain public waters. The draft rule is in response to a petition seeking to limit use of wake boats on Vermont lakes out of concern for safety hazards and environmental damage caused by these boats on lakes and ponds below a certain size.

In a meeting on February 15 in Greensboro, Vermont, staff from the DEC will share the draft rule, discuss the rationale, and solicit feedback. This event will conclude the extensive **pre-rulemaking** process DEC has led over the last 10 months in developing the draft rule, which included two public meetings, receiving and reviewing over 300 written comments, and engaging in 10 meetings with affected recreational user groups and business associations.

DEC's draft rule would allow wake boats to engage in wake sports on public waters under the following three conditions:

1. On lakes, ponds, and reservoirs with a minimum of 50 contiguous acres that are 500 feet from shore on all sides and 20 feet deep (eligibility rule)
2. Wake boats must be 500 feet from shore at all times while engaging in wake sports (operating rule)
3. A wake boat must stay in one lake per calendar year unless boat is decontaminated by a DEC-approved entity (home lake rule)

Under this draft rule, wake boats can engage in wake sports in 31 inland lakes in Vermont.

DEC's draft rule is based on review of legal precedent and Agency of Natural Resources authorities, requirements of the Use of Public Waters Rules (specifically the requirement to resolve use conflicts in the least restrictive manner possible), a review of wake boat regulation

in other states, operational and safety considerations, and studies in the scientific literature about wake boat wave height, wave energy, and related impacts on shoreline erosion.

DEC will consider feedback provided during the February 15 meeting, complete the draft rule, and then launch the **formal rulemaking** process. There will be both an official public hearing and additional opportunity to provide written comment during the upcoming formal rulemaking process.

Learn more about the [draft wake boat rule and sign up to provide feedback](#) at the upcoming meeting, either virtually or in person. The original wake boat petition and supporting documents are available at the [DEC Lakes and Ponds Rulemaking Page](#).

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The Department of Environmental Conservation is responsible for protecting Vermont's natural resources and safeguarding human health for the benefit of this and future generations.

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