



## SB 313 – AN ACT CONCERNING WAKESURFING ON CERTAIN LAKES IN THE STATE: A Guide for Those Submitting Testimony

Wake surfing is a rapidly growing activity that raises real environmental, safety, and user-conflict concerns in Connecticut's small and shallow lakes.

SB 313 attempts to establish a statewide minimum operating distance of 200 feet from shore. This proposed standard is not sufficient to protect Connecticut's lakes and rivers and are opposing this bill as written.

Your voice can help ensure that any statewide policy reflects the ecological realities of our waters.

### How to Use These Talking Points

Legislators respond best to:

- Your lived experience
- Your professional expertise
- Your local knowledge of a specific lake or river
- Impacts you've seen firsthand
- Investments your community has made in water quality

Use the sections below as inspiration. Combine ideas. Add your own story. Speak in your own voice.

### Why SB 313 Needs Stronger Standards

You may want to emphasize that:

- Wake surfing produces waves that are fundamentally different from traditional ski boat wakes.
- Connecticut's lakes are generally small, shallow, environmentally fragile, and densely developed.
- A simple 200-foot setback is insufficient to protect our waters.
- Standards from large Midwestern lakes cannot simply be imported into Connecticut.

You could say: "Connecticut's lakes are not thousands of acres wide. They are small, shallow, and heavily used. A 200-foot rule does not reflect the physical realities of our waters."

### What Makes Wake Surfing Different?

Wake boats are designed to create large, powerful waves using:

- Ballast tanks filled with thousands of pounds of water
- Wake-shaping devices
- Slow speeds that maximize wave energy
- Waves that can travel more than 500 feet before dissipating
- Propeller downwash that can disturb bottom sediments nearly 30 feet deep
- Unlike traditional boating, wake surfing is engineered to amplify wave energy.

You might frame it like this: “This is not the same as water skiing or tubing. Wake surfing is designed to create amplified, sustained waves that behave differently in confined waterbodies.”

## Environmental Impacts to Highlight

You may wish to discuss:

- **Shoreline Erosion:** Repeated large wakes can undercut banks and accelerate erosion.
- **Sediment Resuspension:** Disturbing bottom sediments can release legacy phosphorus and increase the risk of harmful algal blooms.
- **Water Quality Degradation:** Increased turbidity and nutrient loading affects fish and wildlife.
- **Aquatic Invasive Species:** Wake boats use ballast systems that are difficult to fully drain and inspect, increasing the risk of transporting invasive species between waterbodies.

You might say: “Our communities have invested millions of dollars in watershed restoration, stormwater retrofits, vegetation management, and invasive species control. We should not adopt standards that undermine those investments.”

## Why 200 Feet Is Not Enough

You may wish to point out that:

- Wave energy does not stop at 200 feet.
- Depth matters, not just distance.
- Shallow operation increases sediment disturbance.
- Many Connecticut lakes lack sufficient open-water area to safely accommodate wake surfing under weak standards.

You could say: “Distance alone is not enough. Depth, lake size, and available operating area all matter if we are serious about protecting water quality.”

## Local Control

You may wish to emphasize:

- Municipalities currently have authority under state law to adopt boating ordinances subject to DEEP review. This should be maintained through the ability for local communities to establish stronger standards where necessary.
- Statewide minimum standards should protect water quality, but towns must retain authority to adopt stricter protections or bans where appropriate.

## Include Rivers

Encourage legislators to consider rivers in addition to lakes. Certain stretches of the Connecticut and Housatonic Rivers are wide enough to attract wake surfing activity. Riverbanks are often highly susceptible to erosion, and sediment disturbance can affect downstream water quality.

## Themes You May Wish to Emphasize

Depending on your background, you may want to speak to:

- Protection of property from erosion
- Swimmer, paddler and rower safety
- Fisheries and habitat protection
- Impact on fishing

Feel free to tell your story and write what feels authentic to you.

## How to Structure Your Testimony

A simple format works well:

1. Who you are (town, organization, lake association member, paddler, angler, etc.)
2. Why this issue matters to you
3. One or two key concerns about SB 313 as drafted
4. A clear request to amend the bill to establish stronger, science-based standards or wait to act until DEEP has released its Wake Boat & Wakesurf Study.

## How to Submit Testimony

- Go to the [Environment Committee Written Testimony Submission page](#)
- Enter your name (title and organization are optional.)
- If you want your testimony to appear as anonymous, click the "Submit Anonymously" in the top, left hand corner.
- Select the Public Hearing date and time (in this case, 3/4)
- Click on "Support" "Oppose" or "General" depending on your testimony.
- Select SB 313 from the list of bill numbers.
- You can either type your testimony in on this page or upload a file.
- Click the acknowledgement that testimony is provided publicly.
- Click on the "I am not a robot" box.
- Click on "Submit Testimony."

Be sure to:

- Reference SB 313 AN ACT CONCERNING WAKESURFING ON CERTAIN LAKES IN THE STATE
- Indicate that you are submitting written testimony in opposition as drafted
- Include your name and town