

STATEMENT from Senator Mary Felzkowski on wakesurfing bill

Thank you so much for reaching out in regards to the proposed wakesurfing bill. I understand that this is a hot-button issue, but would love the opportunity to explain my thought process on all of this.

A little over a year ago, the first person reached out to me to about doing a full-out ban of wakeboats in Wisconsin. Because that wouldn't realistically ever happen, I told them that this should be solved at the local level. The rebuttal, since then, has been that we need statewide standards on wakeboats to prevent the confusion of having multiple lakes in the same area with different standards – a checkerboard of standards spanning across Wisconsin. Upon circulation of this bill, we are now hearing from the same people who are upset that the standards would apply to all lakes, instead of allowing the local control that I advocated for the previous year. This is what I mean when I say it's a hot-button issue. Those who support wakeboats, want low standards - those who oppose them, want the standards just high enough to keep them off their lake.

As a legislator, I've prided myself on bringing all Wisconsin voices to the table to find solutions that everyone can be okay with. When you work to create compromise, nobody is going to get everything they want, but most are going to be okay. Circulating this bill for co-sponsorship does two things. First, it begins the legislative process – which gives us a public hearing in both houses. This public hearing is our opportunity to hear from concerned citizens, environmental groups, experts, watersports fanatics, and industry representatives – it's an opportunity to hear ALL voices, not just the ones who agree with you on the issue. The second thing it does, is it sets a starting point that everyone can work off of. Often in the legislative process, bills that are introduced get amended, and the final product looks different from the original.

In regards to why certain numbers were chosen as a starting point, we're moving in the direction of more regulation. Currently, the shoreland setbacks for wakeboats is 100ft – our starting point for the conversation is 200ft. The public hearings will dictate where we end up, and whether we need to add other standards.

I very much appreciate hearing from you, and truly believe that your input is invaluable. I will send out information in my E-Updates as soon as I have dates and times for public hearings in the Assembly and Senate. If you'd be interested in receiving those emails, please sign up for my E-Update at the following link: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/12/felzkowski/sign-up-for-my-newsletter/>

When those public hearings take place, I would love to see you come down and testify in Madison. If that is not an option for you, I'd be more than happy to submit written testimony on your behalf.

Once again, this is a starting point, and I look forward to hearing from everyone on this issue. Have a wonderful day!

Mary

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