



## Wisconsin State proposed bills regarding state-wide regulations for wakesurfing.

February 13, 2026

As you may or may not have heard in the news this past week, there were two Wisconsin State proposed bills; AB1033 and SB1024, regarding state-wide regulations for wakesurfing.

---

**Assembly Bill AB1033** <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab1033> Amendment page 3 line 16 and line 19 [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/related/amendments/ab1033/aa1\\_ab1033#:~:text=2025%20%2D%202026%20LEGISLATURE,REG/AB1033%2DAA1%20section%20true](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/related/amendments/ab1033/aa1_ab1033#:~:text=2025%20%2D%202026%20LEGISLATURE,REG/AB1033%2DAA1%20section%20true)

This bill regulates wakesurfing

The bill defines “wakesurfing”

The bill explicitly provides that aquaplaning includes wakesurfing and thereby applies the same safety regulations that apply to water skiing and aquaplaning to wakesurfing.

The bill generally prohibits a person from engaging in wakesurfing unless all of the following apply:

1. The motorboat is operated farther than 300 feet from a shoreline or dock, pier, boathouse, or other structure located completely or partly on the water.
2. The motorboat is operated farther than 300 feet from any person in the water or any occupied vessel.
3. Any person surfing on or across the wake of the motorboat or being towed on a board is wearing a personal flotation device prescribed by federal regulations.

In the bill, wakesurfing does not apply to a wakesurfing tournament, competition, exhibition, or trial that is authorized by the Department of Natural Resources or a municipality and where adequate lighting is provided.

The bill applies the same penalties to wakesurfing that apply to water skiing violations under current law.

Current law requires DNR to establish a program of comprehensive courses on boating safety and operation and to issue certificates to persons 10 years of age or older successfully completing such courses. The bill adds an exception that the course must include education on wakesurfing and the proper use of and operation of motorboats used in wakesurfing.

---

**Senate Bill SB1024** <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/sb1024>

This bill regulates wakesurfing

The bill defines “wakesurfing”

Under the bill, no person may conduct wake-enhanced boating on the waters of this state unless certain conditions are met at all times while the wake-enhanced boating is being conducted. Specifically, wake enhanced boating is conducted;

- 1 at least 500 feet away from the shoreline and
2. in water with a depth of at least 20 feet.

The bill specifies that these restrictions do not preempt or otherwise affect in any way the authority of a local governmental unit to enact more restrictive regulations of wake-enhanced boating.

The bill grants civil immunity to the state, any governmental subdivision or agency of the state, and any officer, official, agent, or employee of those entities that, in good faith, enacts, adopts, or enforces a boating ordinance that imposes restrictions on wake enhanced boating that are more restrictive than those under state law.

---

An article by Channel 12 WJFW, Feb 12, 2026, **Proposed bill aims to set statewide standard for wake boating, surfing activity** [https://www.wjfw.com/news/proposed-bill-aims-to-set-statewide-standard-for-wake-boating-surfing-activity/article\\_71d383cd-2c70-4987-9d2e-88cd18475abb.html](https://www.wjfw.com/news/proposed-bill-aims-to-set-statewide-standard-for-wake-boating-surfing-activity/article_71d383cd-2c70-4987-9d2e-88cd18475abb.html) summarized below;

AB1033 proposed bill would require wake surfing to occur at least 300 feet from shore, which Robert Brooks says is a compromise that still provides guidance to local governments.

However, conservation groups like Wisconsin's Green Fire argue the bill is not strict enough and instead support a proposal, SB1024, requiring 500 feet from shore, 20 feet minimum water depth standards, and stronger local authority.

During testimony before the Wisconsin Assembly Committee on State Affairs, many groups opposed the bill. Paul Heinen said wake boats can damage shorelines, lake ecosystems, and pose safety risks.

Meanwhile, Rob Swearingen said adding water-depth requirements would be difficult to enforce, noting the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources cannot reliably enforce lake depth rules.

Swearingen went on to say that AB1033 would just be a state standard, emphasizing that the bill would still allow local governments to create stricter rules or bans.

The Assembly is expected to vote soon.

---

Contact your Wisconsin State Legislators? You can use the following link to see your State Assembly and Senate maps and Legislators. Just enter your address at the top of the page. For East Troy, WI;

<https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/?version=2024&lat=&lon=&address=>

Senate District 11  
Senator Steve Naas  
(608) 266-2635

Email: [Sen.Nass@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Nass@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Assembly District 33  
Representative. Robin Vos  
(608) 237-9133

Email: [Rep.Vos@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rep.Vos@legis.wisconsin.gov)