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An Interesting Day in Madison

February 11, 2026

Dear Diamond Lakers,

Tonight's newsletter is a very brief update on the happenings in Madison. It was both a good day and a bad day. We'll explain below. The important thing is to keep calling your legislators as this situation is very fluid at the moment.

Let's Go!

Assembly Bill AB 1033

Today the [State Committee on Government Affairs](#) held a public hearing on [AB 1033](#) or as we refer to it — the 'bad bill.'

Three of our board members made the trip to Madison and were present throughout the entire hearing, including providing testimony against the bill.

The bad news of the day was the committee voted to approve the bill along party lines on a 7-3 vote. All seven GOP members voted yes and the three Dem members voted no. This likely clears the way for the full Assembly to take up the bill **as early as tomorrow (2/12)** if they choose to do so.

Here is the good news from today - the public turnout against the bill. **The overwhelming majority of the speakers opposed AB 1033.** People traveled from 3, 4 and even 5 hours away to be in Madison this morning.

A wide and diverse variety of speakers pointed out that AB 1033 fails badly on these counts:

- Distance from shore - the sponsors in an effort to pick up recalcitrant GOP Assembly Members put in a last ditch amendment to the bill, moving the distance from shore to 300 feet from 200 feet. But still far short of the 700 feet some groups advocate and certainly not the compromise 500 foot distance in the counter bill (discussed in our newsletter yesterday [HERE](#)).
- Depth - AB 1033 has zero references to depth despite many new studies noting wakesurfing should be done in depths of 20-30 feet to avoid damaging the lake bottom.
- Local Control - AB 1033 is silent on local control leaving a gaping hole for wakeboat industry attorneys to drive a truck through to challenge the 77 existing local ordinances. A number of attorneys testified today to that effect.
- No Indemnity clause for Towns and Town officials who might approve more protective wakesurf regulations. **We must protect Towns and Town officials from frivolous lawsuits.**

You can watch the full committee hearing at [this link at Wisconsin Eye](#). It is interesting that certain GOP members of the Legislature seem intent on jamming this bill through in a 72-hour period.

The diversity of opposition to AB 1033 is extensive. Conservative Milwaukee talk radio host Dan O'Donnell came out against the bill [on his show yesterday](#) at the same time as the Sierra Club of Wisconsin officially registered against the bill. The Towns Association and League of Municipalities also registered against the bill, fearing it could be a Trojan Horse designed

to gut local control. Even the conservative MacIver Institute [wrote a piece tonight critical of AB 1033](#).

All the official lobbying groups that have registered against the bill are at [this LINK](#).

What Happens Next?

Let's see if the Assembly takes up the bill tomorrow. We'd find it hard to believe they would try to jam this through based on the overwhelming and bipartisan opposition that testified against the bill today at the committee. But the wakeboat lobby is very powerful and well funded.

We still haven't heard from the State Senate. We're hopeful that the counter bill we support might get a bill number and a hearing. Alternatively the Senate could decide the entire situation is too hot to handle and they may not take any action.

All that said, your calls are important. Keep making them.

Let your legislators know you strongly oppose the wakeboat industry's bill otherwise known as **Assembly Bill AB 1033**.

While emails to legislative offices are helpful, a **phone call is far more effective**. You can find your State Assembly Representative and State Senators by clicking the link below. Just enter your address, and you'll be ready to take action.

[**CLICK HERE TO FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR**](#)

Note that we are asking you to make two calls. One to your Assembly Representative **and** a separate call to your State Senator's office.

Tell your legislators that:

- AB 1033 doesn't provide a meaningful distance from shore to protect shorelines and fish habitat.
- The bill is purposely silent on allowing local control, allowing for the gutting of local ordinances.
- The bill does not set **any minimum water depth** requirement for safe wake-surfing operations.
- It is insulting to the voters that such a bill of this importance to voters would be introduced on a Monday and possibly approved only 72 hours later.

Voice your opinion professionally but loud and proud. **Tell them to reject AB 1033.**

We have the votes to win this fight.

CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING!

FUND THE FIGHT IN MADISON!

[Sign up for our mailing list](#) and [follow us on Facebook](#) for the latest news. We will be sending out numerous communications in the days ahead.

Every time a wakeboat issue has gone to a public vote, the outcome has been overwhelmingly in favor of protecting our lakes. The votes are there on this issue—**but only if you [call your legislators](#) to let them know.**

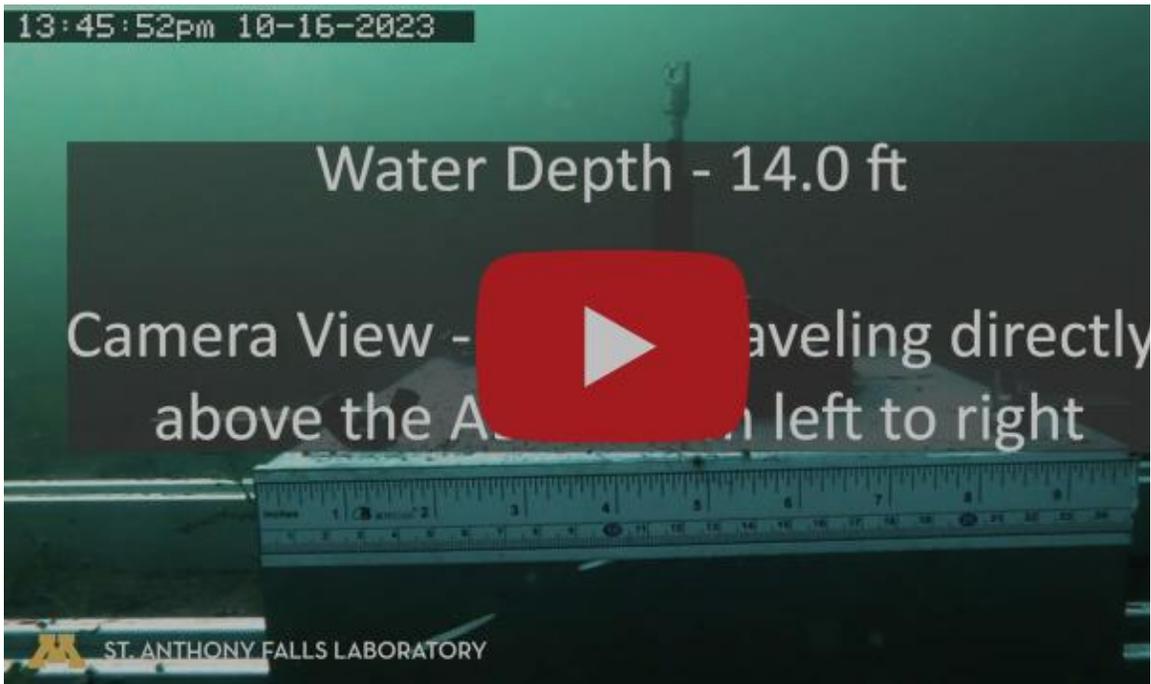
And let's work together to get newly introduced Gustafson/Cabral-Guevara bill that advocates 500 feet from shore/20 foot depth supported and passed. This reasonable compromise legislation can provide a fair outcome for all Wisconsin residents. It will truly protect our lakes while still allowing wakesurfing on bodies of water large enough and deep enough to not cause damage.

Does “200 feet from Shore” look good enough to you?

The video below is from wakeboat testing that the Lake Beulah Management District commissioned last summer. The clip demonstrates a wakeboat in wakesurf mode at a 200 foot distance from shore. Watch the waves batter the docked fishing boat and shoreline! That could be your boat absorbing the damage.



What happens to the lake bottom when a wakeboat passes overhead in fourteen feet of water? Watch the video below from the University of Minnesota Phase II study. Not good! Meanwhile the wakeboat industry insists a 10-foot depth is more than sufficient to protect lake bottoms.



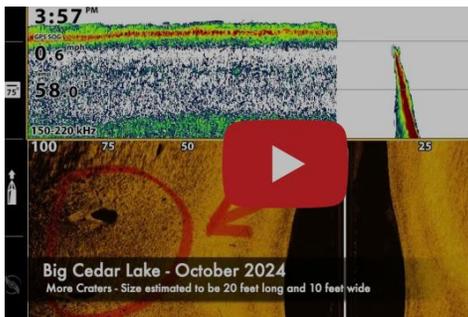
LAKES AT STAKE WISCONSIN

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Lakes at Stake Wisconsin - Downward Bottom Crater and Propwash Videos

Give the videos above a view if you have not already seen them. Many of the Wisconsin lake impacts discussed in our newsletters have now been validated by the [Lake Waramaug study](#) and the [University of Minnesota Phase II study](#).
