



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Media Release

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Rep. Hysell and Rep. Miresse Call Out GOP for Closed Door Wake Boat Meeting

MADISON, WI— Two Wisconsin Democrats are raising serious concerns after Republican legislators held a closed-door meeting about the effects of wake boats on Wisconsin's glacial lakes. Wake boats have become a growing concern across the state due to the damage to fishing nests, shoreline erosion, the potential to introduce invasive species and ability for other users to enjoy the lakes.

At a recent budget listening session, Senator Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk) stated that there would be a meeting on Wednesday, May 28th in which groups would be invited to discuss the controversial issue of wake boats, and their impact to Wisconsin's lakes. However, the meeting occurred with no invitation extended to Democratic Legislators or other important stakeholder groups.

State Representative Andrew Hysell (D-Sun Prairie) stated, "It's deeply disappointing that a meeting on this matter excluded stakeholders squarely impacted by this issue. I am aware of no Tribal Nations or environmental or conservation groups being included in the meeting. When considering legislation that would impact our state's lakes and preempt local control, all stakeholders should be at the table."

Representative Miresse (D-Stevens Point) expressed his concern saying, "Over 50 townships in Wisconsin have enacted ordinances regulating or banning wake boats. They did so based upon local citizen input and scientific data showing the impact wake boats have on ecosystems and habitat. Towns and municipalities are well positioned to represent the interests of their community and protect natural assets like their lakes, and we should respect their wishes. Yet again, Wisconsin Republicans are attempting to unilaterally usurp local control by cozying up to industry executives and special interest groups, when local towns should be making these decisions for themselves, not politicians in Madison."

Wake boats are designed to create waves similar to those naturally occurring in oceans. The waves generated by these boats can reach heights of 5-6 feet and carry massive amounts of energy as they dissipate. Studies have shown that vegetation and fish living in small Wisconsin lakes cannot tolerate these large waves, harming local ecology and fishing.

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