

HB 137 Wake Boat Commission

Testimony of The Raymond Family, Manchester NH April 6, 2020

Good morning Madame Chair and Members of the Commission.

For the record, we are The Raymond Family of Manchester, New Hampshire. I am Stephen, this is my wife Emily and our 9 year old daughter Samantha.

Thank you for hearing from us today. We'd like to give you our perspective on the issue of "wake boats" and watersports, and how important they are to our family. We'll each say a couple of words about ourselves, and then if you have any questions, we are happy to try to answer them.

I'll ask my wife Emily to begin:

Emily:

My name is Emily Raymond. I am 43 years old and mother of this wonderful 9 year old next to me. I am originally from Merrimac, Massachusetts. I am a graduate of Northeastern University in Boston where I earned my degree in nursing. My husband and I have been married for 16 years and have spent many summers on the lake. It is actually where we met. In 2001, one of Steve's friends (Ryan) that he met through wakeboarding on the Lake Winnisquam was dating a friend (Sue) of mine since high school. Throughout the course of the summer and time on the water together, Steve also got to know Sue quite well. In talking with Sue during the summer, she told me that I should come up to the lake and meet Ryan's friend, "WB" short for wakeboard Steve. Later that fall I finally made it up to the lake and I got to meet Steve. After we met we started dating and the rest was history. As somebody who was more of an ocean girl, Steve showed me the ropes on the lake and I quickly began to enjoy and share the passion for the lake and watersports like Steve and his friends.

The perspective I'd like to share is how important recreational boating, watersports and wake sports are to our family. We are outside, we are entertaining friends and family, we are enjoying New Hampshire and its natural resources, and we are limiting "screen time" for our daughter and her friends, which is increasingly important in today's world. We operate responsibly – we take our boating very seriously, just like we do our driving. It is important to learn the laws and be courteous to others. I'm sorry if not all boaters act in such a manner, which is probably why you are here today.

For the many family boaters out there like us, who enjoy and thrive on the water, we ask that you not recommend limiting, banning or regulating a specific type of boat or watersports activity. The state's waters belong to all of us, whether you live on the lake as we are fortunate to do, or not. People need to be educated and comply with the laws we have today. The Marine Patrol

force on Lake Winnisquam does an excellent job but they are limited in budget and workforce. It is all of our responsibility to make sure we keep our lakes safe for others. As a mom, who tows her daughter, husband, and friends, we are extra careful about distances and other boat traffic. The mistakes I sometimes see on the lake, do not seem to be purposeful, sometimes I think the boat operator just doesn't know. We need to educate boaters and non-motorized boaters, to increase safety and enjoyment on our lakes. I believe the boating community would support further education over attempts at restrictive regulation.

I'd like to introduce you to our daughter Samantha, who has a few words of her own to say:

Samantha:

Hello, my name is Samantha Raymond. I want to keep wake boats very much. I've gotten a lot of my bravery from our boat. I get to try new things like wakesurfing. I'm very good at it now. It's so much fun. I also get to spend time with friends and family in the summer. Putting the boat in the water is fun to look forward too. I love our boat. It's just something to look forward to every year. Tubing is fun too. When I'm older some of my favorite memories will probably have to do with the boat. We can do a lot of fun things behind our boat. My cousins and I make up a lot of fun things on our boat too. I love to ride in the bow also. I also love to jump off the boat. This year when I go wakesurfing I really want to do a 360 spin and try to jump up in the air with the board and land. I really want my cousins to ride without the rope too. Those 3 things would be cool. I've gotten to know people through the boat too. I also love going to the sandbar. I like getting ice cream from the ice cream boat too. And also "I speak not for myself, but for everyone else. I raise up my voice not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard" by Malala Yousafzai. We should keep wake boats. I am Samantha Raymond and I approve this message.

Stephen:

Thank you. And finally, my name is Stephen and I am a New Hampshire native, being born and raised in Goffstown New Hampshire. When I was 8 years old, my parents bought a camp in Sanbornton and we spent our summers (and a lot of springs and falls) on Lake Winnisquam. My parents have always had a boat and I grew up waterskiing and tubing on the lake - this was our family time. My love of the lakes started at a young age and has never gone away.

When wakeboarding became a sport in the early 90's I was the first on the lake to start wakeboarding as a teen. Because of my love of the water, I wanted to pursue a career in Environmental Engineering. So, I went to WPI and received my Civil Engineering degree with a concentration in Environmental Engineering in 1998. While at WPI I was the founder of the WPI waterski and wakeboard club and spent a number of years traveling the east coast attending collegiate competitions on large lakes and small lakes and meeting many friends through and introducing new people to the sport. During my college years, I spent my summers working at Winnisquam Marina on the lake. In that position I became very familiar with the many types of

boats, people that operate the boats, the marina industry, and the overall lifestyle that is related to the lake.

When I graduated in 1998 my first major purchase was an inboard ski boat that I used for waterskiing and wakeboarding. I competed locally and Nationally in wakeboarding on small lakes and large lakes through my 20's and 30's and have had the opportunity to share my love of the sport with others and make lifelong friends. I've had the opportunity to mentor young kids into their adult years. I've also had the opportunity to develop relationships with people twice my age that I would have never met without the sport. As you have already heard, I met Emily through friends from wakeboarding. My wife and I have wake boarded and wake surfed together for many years. We share this passion and have committed to raising our daughter to have the same experiences we have enjoyed.

In 2015, my wife and I were lucky enough to purchase our own camp on Lake Winnisquam. About 3 years ago I stopped wakeboarding and turned to full time wake surfing as wake surfing is a great sport that can keep you active and healthy and you can share the experience with a lot more people because of the ability to learn wakesurfing easily and the less intimidating nature of the sport. My daughter has wake boarded and wake surfed since she was 5 and absolutely loves her time on the water with her parents, extended family, and friends. We are all also avid paddle boarders on the lake. We love every aspect of our time on the water whether it is motorized or non-motorized.

I also wanted to bring a unique perspective to the Commission on wake boating that is based on my life experiences, schooling, and career choice. As I mentioned, I went to college because of my love of the water and ambition to pursue a career in Environmental Engineering that could help improve the environment we all share. After I graduated from WPI with my degree, I took a job with GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. located in Bedford, NH as an entry level Environmental Engineer. GZA is one of NH's and New England's leading Environmental Engineering firms. I have been at GZA for over 20 years and have worked almost exclusively in the Environmental Remediation industry which specializes in the clean-up of environmentally impacted areas. (meaning surface water, ground water, soil, and building materials). I am currently a Sr. VP of Construction Management at GZA responsible for the implementation of remediation projects through-out the country including significant clean-ups of water bodies, groundwater, and soil. I am currently managing one of the largest environmental clean-up projects in the country on the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn, NY. Many of our remediation projects include restoration of wetlands and shorelines.

Because of this background, I understand the water related issues that can affect remediation and restoration projects. I also understand the water related issues that impact our shorelines, that, from what I have read and heard, seem to be incorrectly attributed to wake boating. I saw in the duties of the Commission that you are studying the impacts of wake boating as it pertains to shoreline erosion and impacts to private property. What I hope the Commission is learning about is the many other factors that attribute to erosion more than wake-boating ever could. These factors include development, improper shoreline improvements, vegetation/tree removal,

stormwater runoff, ice, wind, and water levels. For example, ice is a factor that many do not think of, because they don't see it or understand its impact...it's out of sight – therefore out of mind. However, during the winter months and in the spring, ice can cause significant damage and erosion to shorelines. During the hard winter freeze, ice forms around the rocks and soil on the shoreline and if lake levels fluctuate either upward or downward, the ice will push rocks further up onto the shore destabilizing the soil below or it can pull rocks into the water destabilizing the soil above. In addition, during the spring thaw, ice drifts moving due to quick melting or due to wind can pull rock and soil off of the shore or can push rocks and soil up onto the shore. In addition to ice damage, erosion resulting from sustained winds and resulting wave action can cause significant erosion of shorelines. This constant battering of waves at a high velocity driven by the wind delivers significantly more force to the shore than a wave from a boat can. Both of these natural events described above cause more erosion in one season than years of wave action from a boat could ever cause to the shoreline.

I am happy to tell you more or answer any questions about these other prominent factors in the erosion of our shorelines.

I thank you for hearing from our family and appreciate the time you are all taking to learn more about the issues.

Family Photos



Out on the water with Emily driving the boat and Steve surfing



Steve and Sam on the water



Sam surfing behind the boat



Sam surfing behind the boat