

# Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5222

**Title:** AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NO-WAKE-ZONE ON THE PAWCATUCK RIVER.

**Vote Date:** 3/8/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/28/2024

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Environment Committee  
Rep. Aundre Bumgardner, 41st Dist.  
Sen. Heather S. Somers, 18th Dist.  
Rep. Greg S. Howard, 43rd Dist.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The Pawcatuck River flows along the Connecticut-Rhode Island border. Some boaters travelling along a stretch of the river are causing risk to themselves and others by travelling at inappropriate speeds for the geography of the river. The wakes generated by high-speed travel also increase the rate of erosion of the riverbank. There currently exists several small 'slow-no wake' zones on the river between navigation markers 6 and 16; this bill seeks to amend the entirety of the section between the markers on the Connecticut side of the river to ensure one continuous no-wake-zone.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Katie Dykes, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection**

DEEP supports this bill because they recognize that boat wakes from vessels traveling near shore above slow-no-wake spend can cause property damage and potentially dangerous conditions. The navigation channel in this section of the Pawcatuck River is close to the western shoreline. The agency has received complaints in recent years about boat wakes affecting property. The calls triggered responses and resource allocation by DEEP's Environmental Conservation Police. The implementation of a no-wake-zone through this stretch of the river would elevate this problem.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Representative Gregory S. Howard, 43<sup>rd</sup> District**

Representative Howard recounts the current

The Representative supports this bill even though he understands that boat owners object to this no-wake-zone because it makes their trip out of the river longer. In his opinion, the exchange for that extra 10 minutes of travel time will: create a safer channel for all, reduce concerns of erosion in the area, and facilitate a good partnership with our neighbors in Rhode Island to continue the generations of cooperation between two towns and states in the Pawcatuck River.

### **Jeanne Dubino**

The testifier expresses support for a no-wake-zone and its ability to reduce river erosion and protect animals and people alike.

### **Mary La Scala**

The testifier expresses support for the bill.

### **Maizie Ogren**

The testifier expresses support for the bill.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

### **Devin & Tom Maloney**

The testifiers oppose the expanded no-wake-zone, stating that it will impact boat-owners ability to enjoy the open water. They suggest that if it is a safety concern, that the Stonington Harbor Master has authority to implement no-wake-zones for safety concerns.

### **Michael Dupre**

The testifier opposes the additional no-wake-zones, as pre-existing restrictions help with the safety risk, and the slow travel will make the marinas less desirable.

### **Eric Sullivan**

The testifier expresses the belief that large no-wake-zones will reduce the amount of usable time for people to be on the water.

**Reported by: Judy Ganswindt**

**Date: 3/24/2024**