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## WATER SKIER TOURNAMENT PRACTICE

### House Bill 4060

**Sponsor: Rep. Mary Ann Middaugh**  
**Committee: Conservation and Outdoor  
Recreation**

**Complete to 2-17-99**

### A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4060 AS INTRODUCED 1-28-99

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) prohibits any type of watercraft from towing a person on water skis unless there is an observer on board to watch the person being towed and communicate that person's condition and needs to the vessel operator. House Bill 4060 would allow an exception to this provision under certain circumstances.

Under the bill, a vessel operator could tow a person without having an observer on board if the skier was preparing for a specific water ski tournament and the following conditions were met:

- The vessel operator was certified, as provided under the bill.
- The person being towed was certified, as provided under the bill.
- The towing was conducted so that, on average, not more than one vessel approached within 300 feet of the towing vessel during any five-minute period.
- The vessel was equipped with a center mounted tow pylon and a large clear rearview mirror capable of allowing the vessel operator to distinguish hand signals at a distance of 75 feet; and the vessel's markings identified it as being operated in compliance with the provisions of the bill.

Standards for Boat Operators. The bill would require that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) adopt the standards for the operators of vessels during water ski tournaments established by U.S.A. Water Ski in "Trained Boat Driver Program," (April, 1997), and by the American Water Ski Association in "Drivers' Policy Manual." The DNR could also promulgate rules providing for alternative standards. In addition, tournament water ski vessel operators would receive proof of their certification from the DNR.

Standards for Tournament Water Skiers. The bill would also require that the DNR adopt the standards for tournament water skiers established by the Michigan Water Ski Association in "Guidelines for Training Permit Eligibility," (Proposed Revision 125 of 1996). The DNR could also promulgate rules providing for alternative standards. In addition, tournament water skiers would receive proof of their certification from the DNR. Each certificate would have to specify the body or bodies of water where the skier would be allowed to practice.

List of Qualified Water Skiers. The Michigan Water Ski Association would be required to provide the DNR and the Michigan Sheriffs Association each year with a list of qualified tournament water skiers, and the names of up to three bodies of water on which each of those persons could be authorized to practice for tournament water skiing.

MCL 324.80152

Analyst: R. Young

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.