



World of Windsurfing e.V. (WOW) | Steinerstr. 15 d | D-81369 Munich

INTERNATIONAL SAILING FEDERATION (ISAF)  
President Mr Göran Petersson  
and all AGM Board Members

**To all Board Members present at the 2012 ISAF Annual Conference on 10.11.2012**  
**- please distribute -**

Munich, 24. September 2012

Dear Sirs,

Being a community of interest on behalf of windsurfing, World of Windsurfing (WOW) is very concerned about the possible dropping of windsurfing in favor of kite surfing at the Olympics in 2016, which is why we are addressing you today.

World of Windsurfing e. V. ([www.worldofwindsurfing.org](http://www.worldofwindsurfing.org)) was founded by the most important stakeholders of the windsurfing business in January 2007 as a non-profit association under German law. The association is politically and denominationally neutral and independent from any individual interests of its members.

On behalf of its members (associations, special interest media, brands, travel companies, suppliers, OEMs etc.), WOW operates internationally in the fields of market research, communication, public relations, online marketing and event management.

These are WOW's current members: Cobra International, JP-Australia, Neil Pryde, Starboard, Fanatic, North Sails, surf Magazin, surf & action company, Club Mistral and F2 Boards.

WOW's goal is to strengthen windsurfing in any possible way and to raise awareness and popularity of the sport especially amongst the non-windsurfing-community (or not-yet-windsurfing-community, as we see it).

[www.worldofwindsurfing.org](http://www.worldofwindsurfing.org)

World of Windsurfing e.V. (WOW) | Steinerstr. 15 d | D-81369 Munich  
fon: +49 (0) 89 723 083 47 | fax: +49 (0) 89 729 602 40 | [info@worldofwindsurfing.org](mailto:info@worldofwindsurfing.org)



There are various reasons that speak for Windsurfing remaining an Olympic discipline. Windsurfing is an easy-access sport: for youngsters, for women, for nations with little sport promotion funds or people with no access to these. Its disappearance from the Olympic Games would be a kickback for the overall perception of sailing sports. It would also be a kickback for the sports and touristic development of small and emerging nations. Please find our arguments below:

### 1. Appeal to the youth

*Windsurfing has established a large variety of programs for the offspring. This is also proven by the fact that six times more youngsters took up windsurfing in the past 12 months in comparison to kite surfing, according to a study by Yachting Australia.*

*The RS:X Class is actively involved in developing racing fleets in the U21, U19 and U17 Age Divisions who compete in separate World and Continental Championships. This cannot be said for kite surfing!*

*With the Techno 293 now in place as the youth pathway feeder class equivalent to the Optimist, junior windsurf racing is growing strongly in countries like Indonesia, Peru, Argentina and the USA. (Source: Rory Ramsden, COO RS:X class)*

*Windsurfing is safe and easy to learn and offers little risk to other water users. It is a mature and well-structured sport with a clear youth pathway allowing kids as young as 8 or 9 to learn in safety. This can certainly not be said for kite boarding!*

### 2. Female participation

*80 women from 37 countries competed in the RS:X World Championships, in kite surfing, only 12 women competed in the Kite Course Racing World Championships. (Note by WOW: this corresponds to a 40% participation of females at RS:X and only 15% at Kite Course Racing!) Only two women were able to complete all the races at the Kite Course. (Source: Nevin Sayre's open letter to US Sailing)*

*This shows a strong appeal to women to compete in windsurfing.*

### 3. Windsurfing is one of the biggest sailing discipline on the planet

*Approximately 48,000 people learned to windsurf in 2011 (expansion from the VDWS figures). Windsurfing is done in more than 100 countries across the globe by people between 8 and 80 years of age.*



*At these Olympic Games, 60 member countries from 6 continents were involved in the sports. These are figures that speak for themselves. Windsurfing plays a crucial role in creating global attention to sailing sports as such and has a bright future with the Techno 293 growing more and more popular amongst the offspring.*

4. Windsurfing offers the least expensive route into the Olympic Regatta for small and emerging sailing nations

*Both in terms of equipment and campaign costs, starting with the Techno 293 which costs less than an Optimist and continuing with the RS:X which costs less than a Laser, countries with little budget find easy access to windsurfing. Paired with the fact that success in this sport comes down to the abilities of the athlete only, not their ability to acquire the best and most advanced (and most expensive) material, windsurfing has a strong appeal with emerging nations.*

*54 countries took part in the 2012 Olympic Qualification series. Countries like Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Guatemala, Iran, Jamaica, Oman, Peru and the Philippines now have windsurfing development programs. In the last 7 Olympiads, athletes from 5 continents (Oceania, Asia, Europe, North America and South America) have won medals.*

5. Windsurfing plays an important role in the touristic development

*The impacts of the touristic development of windsurfing spots are unparalleled. Besides a secured income and regular work, new windsurfing spots have also helped to build an infrastructure in various areas around the world. (Source: Surf & action company, Germany)*

*Here are some examples:*

- *Alaçati (Turkey): the development of windsurfing has led to the construction of six hotels, an apartment complex for 2,000 people and it created hundreds of jobs*
- *Dahab (Egypt): With windsurfing came 8 hotels, 12 water sport schools and thousands of new jobs. The village has been revaluated, receiving new infrastructure and amenities.*
- *El Yaque, Venezuela: Thanks to windsurfing, 6 hotels were built. The region now has a support centre for poor children and youngsters who want to learn windsurfing.*



## 6. Logistics and infrastructure

*Being as new as it is, kite racing is a competition format that needs further development and may require more security measurements on shore and on the water. Even if this assumption proves to be wrong, the fact remains that infrastructure for windsurfing is less than required for kite racing as the boards are the same size & kite rigging and launching areas require more space. Windsurfing certainly requires less infrastructure than all other sailing classes. (Source: Double Olympic windsurfing medalist, Bruce Kendall 's open letter to US Sailing)*

*Both windsurfing and kite surfing can be performed close to shore, which makes them both spectator-friendly sports. However, comparing windsurfing to kite surfing, it must be noted that in low wind speeds, windsurfing contests can take place, whilst kite surfing ones cannot once the wind drops below a certain level (kite boards don't float!). Besides this, Windsurf racing takes place in the same wind speeds as other Olympic Sailing Events.*

*This is also a reason why a continuous training is more difficult for kite surfing newcomers: only in good wind conditions, they can practice racing. Upcoming windsurfing talents can practice in a much broader variety of conditions, meaning again that the sport and its perfection is more accessible for windsurfers, who don't need to travel that far or wait that long to train.*

## 7. Windsurfing attracts spectators and the media

*Windsurfing has a broad audience: it is followed by a broadcast TV audience in more than 150 countries, and an internet audience in 169 countries – it has the strongest web presence of all Olympic classes and achieves a TV attention as high as e.g. the Scandia Class, which has a much larger fan base. (Source: Rory Ramsden, COO RS:X class)*

*Considering that media attention is a key deciding factor for the IOC, windsurfing has well deserved its right to be and remain an Olympic discipline.*

We would like to emphasize the fact that whilst we have used comparisons to kite surfing for our arguments, we do not want to make the impression that we are against this young sport. On the contrary: WOW likes kite surfing; it helps to make sailing sports attractive. But we see it as a spectacular water sport for a few as it is certainly not accessible for everyone.



We therefore ask the ISAF members to revise their decision taken at the mid-year general meeting on 5. May 2012. Vote windsurfing back into the Olympics for the sake of the many, many people around the World of all ages and both genders that enjoy this easy-access and attractive sailing sport.

Yours sincerely,

World of Windsurfing e.V., represented by

Danu Chotikapanich, CEO / Executive Board Member and

Martin Brandner CEO / Executive Board Member