

SB 602 Waldo Lake Motorized Ban

Senate Environmental and Natural Resources Committee

Chair and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to give testimony today. My name is Chuck Tucker. I reside at 1944 NW Trenton Ave. Bend OR, 97701. I am here representing the paddling community of Central Oregon. We strongly support the motorized ban for Waldo Lake.

In my 22 year career as an Air Force Civil Engineer, I was involved in building, maintaining and operating airfields all over the world. I am a proponent of aviation. I say this to highlight how much I feel we need a motorized ban on Waldo Lake.

Waldo is one of the 3 clearest lakes in the world. It is arguably the best paddling lake in Oregon or indeed the Northwest. When you are out on it's cobalt blue waters you can look down and see the bottom 100 feet below. Experts say in good weather you can see over 150 feet deep. It gives one the feeling of flying or floating on air. A very unique and sought after wilderness paddling experience.

Waldo is surrounded on three sides by wilderness area. The eastern shore has three Forest service campgrounds set back from the water to provide a wilderness experience. Incinerator toilets were installed to avoid groundwater pollution. The Forest Service has been advocating a motorized ban on Waldo for years.

When the Marine Board ask for input on a motorized ban for Waldo; they received 4,414 written inputs. (The most input they have received on any subject.) A tally of the input showed 4,108 favored of the motorized ban. The Marine Board was justified in banning motor boats from Waldo Lake. We have not heard any numbers from the Aviation Board hearings on seaplanes, but it is fair to assume the ratio is similar (over 90% in favor of the ban). As the Governor pointed out in his letter to the Aviation Board supporting the motorized ban we currently have a disconnect between boards with motor boats banned and seaplanes allowed on Waldo Lake. This situation needs to be addressed.

As a paddler there are many lakes and rivers I do not use in summer because of the cacophony of power boats and jet skis. In many places it is dangerous to paddle through this maelstrom because attention is on skiers and wake boarders. In such conditions canoes and kayaks are not easily seen. It is not too much to ask that we have one pristine, quite, wilderness lake that paddlers can enjoy in it's natural state. Oregon should do everything possible to preserve Waldo in this pristine, wilderness state for future generations.

In preserving any lake of Waldo's quality we must be mindful of invasive species. Paddle and power boats in Oregon are required to have invasive species tags and a program of inspection is beginning. It needs a lot of improvement to protect a lake like Waldo. There are no invasive species protections in effect for seaplanes in Oregon. This is ironic because seaplanes have the ability to move from a contaminated body of water to a clean lake in a very short time. This is another reason to support a full motorized ban on Waldo Lake.