

PETER A. DeFAZIO
4TH DISTRICT, OREGON



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ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

March 15, 2013

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

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The Honorable Jackie Dingfelder
Chair
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Dingfelder:

I am writing in strong support of SB602, legislation introduced by Senator Floyd Prozanski to ban the use of float planes on Waldo Lake consistent with the current restriction of motorized boat use. The use of internal combustion engines of any kind on the lake – save for emergencies – is simply not appropriate. I encourage you to consider and pass this important bill without delay.

Waldo Lake is one of the most spectacular places in the State of Oregon. It is the second deepest lake in the state with water quality that is one of the purest in the world. It is so clear, the lake's visibility measures at over 100 feet deep. The U.S. Congress and the Oregon Legislature have recognized the special nature of the lake by designating the land on three sides of the lake as wilderness and listing the lake itself as a Scenic Waterway – the only lake in all of Oregon with this designation.

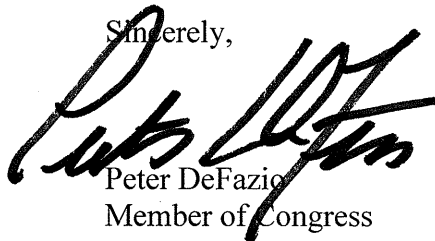
There is overwhelming public support for a quiet visitor experience at Waldo Lake where family and friends can camp, paddle, sail, hike, bike, and picnic without noise from combustible engines. In fact, in a 2003 survey of visitors to Waldo Lake over 75 percent of respondents agreed that motorized boating negatively impacted a primitive recreation experience. More than 85 percent favored controlling the level of noise from motorized recreation and 70 percent of respondents favored only allowing non-motorized boats or electric motors on Waldo Lake.

Simply put, float plane access would conflict with current management of Waldo Lake and unnecessarily threaten its unique and irreplaceable qualities that Oregonians and out-of-state visitors have come to expect. Float planes access would be inconsistent with wilderness areas, which are considered to be “noise sensitive” by the Federal Aviation Authority and which recommends avoidance of these areas if possible or flying 2,000 feet above ground level if not. Float planes could jeopardize the lake's water quality. While the chances of a fuel spill or leak are small the consequences could be environmentally and socially unacceptable – a risk that could be completely eliminated by passing SB602 into law.

It is also my understanding that very few pilots access Waldo Lake by float plane. According to the USFS, during the peak recreation period in August and September of last year there were only six landings. I agree with Willamette Forest Supervisor Meg Mitchell's assessment: "Codifying float plane use now, when there has been little or no use in the past, seems to be a solution in search of a problem."

I have a long history on aviation issues in the U.S. House of Representatives and have worked tirelessly and consistently to remove obstacles that impair and/or impeach general aviation. However, Waldo Lake is a special place that deserves special protection. I add my voice to the voice of thousands of Oregonians, Governor John Kitzhaber, supervisor of the Willamette National Forest, the director of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, and the Oregon State Marine Board in support of a ban on the use of float planes on Waldo Lake. I hope you will agree that such a ban is in the broader public interest, both present and future, and pass SB602.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter DeFazio", written in a cursive style.

Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress