Statement to the Oregon State Aviation Board by the Oregon Sierra Club on Waldo Lake Rulemaking Concerning Seaplane Landings, January 31, 2013

Hello, I am Larry Pennington from Bend, Oregon. I am the Vice Chair of the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club and represent the Sierra Club’s more than 20,000 members and supporters in Oregon.

The State Marine Board upheld the Waldo Lake ban on gas motor boats in April, 2012. This decision recognized not only the overwhelming will of Oregonians to protect Waldo Lake, but importantly the unique status of Waldo Lake as an environmental and recreational jewel of Oregon. The Aviation Board's temporary rulemaking in May, 2012 allowing seaplanes on Waldo Lake granted usage to a small minority of users while ignoring the will of the vast majority of traditional recreation users. I urge the Board to follow the lead of the Marine Board, the US Forest Service which has long advocated banning gasoline motors on Waldo Lake, and now the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, and prohibit seaplane landings on Waldo Lake.

I urge you to take into consideration:

- Waldo Lake is arguably one of the purest lakes in the world. This is a stunning quality that should not be placed at risk.
- The overriding benefit to citizens from hiking, camping or paddling at Waldo Lake is tranquility and quietude. With wilderness on three sides and old growth forest on the fourth, the lake provides a unique semi-primitive nature experience not available on lakes with noisy, motorized craft of any kind.
- Seaplane access creates an unacceptable risk of water and air pollution from usage, accidents and fuel spills. An oil slick on Waldo Lake would be an incalculable loss and likely take decades to dissipate.
- Introducing invasive species attached to plane surfaces is a real threat. Practically speaking, seaplanes with multiple water-body flight plans cannot be screened and cleaned prior to each landing on Waldo Lake. Allowing seaplanes on Waldo Lake puts the lake at grave risk and significantly compromises the State of Oregon’s campaign to safeguard Oregon’s waters from invasive species.
- The noise and fumes of seaplanes landing and taking off will impact not only people, but wildlife and water fowl who claim that wild area as home.
- Canoeists and kayakers use Waldo Lake extensively since it is the only large lake in the western U.S. that is free of motorized craft. Seaplane access disrupts their quiet exploration and creates a high potential for tragic accidents.
- Designated as a scenic waterway, Waldo Lake's use should be limited to recreation, not a landing/takeoff strip. While seaplanes are transportation, the level of impact caused by transporting a few privileged people by seaplane is utterly disproportionate to that caused by land transport to the lake.
• Waldo Lake is ringed by water bodies where seaplane landings are allowed, such as Odell, Crescent, Davis, Wickiup, and Crane Prairie. There is no shortage of seaplane landing areas in the immediate area.

• Future generations would be deprived of the priceless opportunity to escape civilization’s presence while paddling, hiking or relaxing with a book at lakeside. Your decision will affect not just visitors in 2013, but visitors in 2053 and so on. It is incumbent upon the present generation of decision-makers to not take lightly their duty to protect such unique natural heritage as we have in Waldo Lake, for great-great grandchildren and into the centuries ahead.

For these reasons, I ask the Aviation Board to listen to the citizens of Oregon and ban seaplanes on Waldo Lake. Waldo Lake is one of the few last pristine areas for quiet recreation in Oregon. We cheat ourselves and future generations by risking the loss of this unique Oregon and National treasure. As a State agency, you are accountable to ALL of its citizens, not just a privileged few who fly seaplanes.