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

Dear Senator Dingfelder:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is a not-for-profit membership organization that represents the general aviation interests of nearly 400,000 members nationwide, including more than 6,000 in Oregon, and 17,000 throughout the Pacific Northwest. Since 1939, AOPA has been committed to ensuring the safety, future viability, and development of general aviation airports and their facilities, including floatplane operations, as a part of our national transportation system.

We are writing on behalf of our members to strongly oppose Senate Bill 602, or any other legislative vehicle that would ban the operations of floatplanes on Waldo Lake. Last April, the state's Aviation Board acted to reopen the lake to floatplane activity. AOPA and our members believe that the existing rules permitting limited and conditional floatplane access (restricted to only a portion of the lake) provide reasonable access, minimize impact on other lake users, and are consistent with other forms of existing motorized vehicle uses to and around the lake. In the few months that the lake has been open to floatplanes, traffic has been light, and we understand there to have been no incidents that would cause concern for continued access.

In Oregon, there are already 85 lakes and reservoirs off limits to floatplane operations, and many more too small to allow any operations at all. Prohibiting access to Waldo Lake, Oregon's second largest, would unreasonably restrict access to this resource belonging to all Oregonians, one which has been safely and unobtrusively used by floatplanes for decades. Many public entities, including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the National Park service have recognized the importance and minimal impact of floatplane operations, and have safely and reasonably accommodated them within their boundaries. We are confident the State of Oregon can do the same at Waldo Lake.

Again, AOPA and our members strongly oppose Senate Bill 602, and urge the Committee to issue a "do not pass" recommendation. If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-695-2106.

Sincerely,

Gregory Pecoraro
Vice President
Airports and State Advocacy