



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Law Enforcement and Public Safety
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Denver, CO 80216
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September 21, 2015

Director Jared Esselman
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
421 Aviation Way
Frederick, MD 21701

Director Esselman:

Thank you for facilitating the teleconference regarding sea plane use in Colorado last week with Governor's Office staff, Department of Natural Resources staff and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) staff.

Assistant Directors Gaspar Perricone and Heather Dugan have briefed me on the content of the discussion, and noted that during the meeting you requested a letter clarifying the scope of CPW regulation #P100-b.15.

CPW regulations are promulgated by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, and are meant to provide maximum recreational opportunity on the state's natural, scenic and recreation areas while also protecting, preserving and managing these areas for the benefit and enjoyment of the citizens and visitors of the state.

CPW's regulation regarding aircraft prohibits landing or taking off with any type of aircraft on any Parks and Outdoor Recreation lands and waters except in the case of an emergency. This regulation does not apply to any lands or waters owned, managed or operated by agencies or entities outside of CPW.

Although this regulation does not apply to non-CPW managed waters, as part of our mission to protect the citizens and natural resources of Colorado, we do have the same public safety and aquatic invasive species concerns for any waters within the state. If you are successful in coming to agreement with another water management agency, we hope that you will consider mitigating these concerns.

Sincerely,

Mike King
Executive Director
Department of Natural Resources



Action 22 Statement of Opposition to HB16-1315

Under current law seaplanes, defined as aircraft that can "take off from and land and float on water," are not allowed on waters of the state, primarily lakes under the jurisdiction of the state. HB16-1315 sponsored by Rep. Jovan Melton of Arapahoe County would amend the statute to allow seaplanes to operate on waters of the state where motor boats are allowed to operate.

Action 22, the Voice of Southern Colorado, is opposed to this legislation because it imposes dangers to both the users of these waters and to the waters themselves. As a practical matter waters of the state in this context means lakes, many of which are part of state parks or other recreation areas.

Seaplanes can endanger water quality

Lakes are valuable assets and stringent measures have been put in place to protect these waters from invasive and destructive species of animal and plant life. Under current law and regulations, motorboats and many other watercraft using these waters are required to be cleaned of any such invasive species before they can be used on lakes in the state.

The law is enforced in an orderly and cost-effective manner by conducting inspections of watercraft before they are launched. Many boats operate on only one or two lakes and are less likely to be exposed to invasive species.

Aircraft by their very nature can fly in from anywhere and land directly on the water, presenting no opportunity for inspection. Aircraft fly from waterway to waterway, picking up any number of harmful hitchhiking species along the way. Once introduced into state waters, invasive species are very difficult to remove.

Seaplanes are not compatible with other uses.

Many of the recreational lakes in the state, especially at state parks, are used by a wide variety of watercraft ranging from sailboats, human powered vessels, motor boats, jetskis and more. Some are slow moving and incapable of maneuvering out of danger. Some are floating platforms used for fishing swimming and the like. Some pull water skiers and other platforms with people.

Boats are able to safely operate because they are in a two-dimensional environment. Look out for other objects on the surface and the operator can avoid conflict.

Seaplanes, on the other hand, are fast moving and have limited directional control. The lightest and slowest seaplane weighs close to a ton. That plane approaches a landing at at least 60 miles per hour, faster than all but the fastest jet skis. That plane requires at least a quarter-mile to take off **at sea level**. Colorado's lakes are well above sea level so that distance doubles. A seaplane cannot be easily stopped. Once on a take-off run or landing it will continue in the same direction until in the air or stopped by the water resistance. It cannot make a rapid turning maneuver to avoid obstacles such as people in boats.

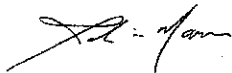
Seaplanes add a third dimension – they come down from the sky – not where most boat operators are looking for danger. Unlike airports, there are no common rules or control towers that enable seaplanes to operate safely on lakes.

On a nice summer day, Colorado's lakes are very crowded, sometimes to the point that the controlling authority has to limit access. A crowded Colorado lake is way too small to allow for safe seaplane operation.

Vote no on HB16-1315

For the reasons stated Action 22 urges a no vote on HB16-1315. There is no feasible way to overcome the risks created by allowing seaplanes on waters in Colorado.

Approved by the Board of Directors of Action 22
March 11, 2016



John Marrin, Board Chair

