

## **Testimony of Mr. Michael Han**

### **Re: Committee on Natural Resources Hearing on H.R. 5671 July 15, 2008**

Thank you Honorable Chairman Rahall and all committee members for allowing me the opportunity to share with you my local business perspective, and the perspective of the membership of the Shasta Lake Business Owners Association as it relates to the Shasta Lake Marina Bill

My Name is Michael Han; I am the Chief Operating Officer for Water Resorts Incorporated. My responsibilities are the management of six marinas in California, three of which are on Shasta Lake.

Shasta Lake is the houseboating capitol of the world. No other body of water offers the public more opportunity when it comes to houseboat rentals.

The Shasta Trinity National Recreation Area was designated by Congress to provide a "showcase" for recreation in the National Forest system.

Shasta Lake is unique in many capacities; one of them is the lake level fluxuation. Shasta Lake is the keystone to the Central Valley Water Project managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, and is the largest reservoir in California with the second largest dam in the United States.

Our Lake level fluxuates from 50 to 70 feet draw down over the irrigation season. When I fist accepted the position I truly believed the management of a fresh water marina would be less complex than a salt water marina. Was I wrong - - the tide goes up and down 5 to 6 feet a day. At Shasta for example this summer; we are forecast to be 130 feet below the full pool mark. Imagine how we have to address fuel, black water, power, phone lines and public access on a lake bed.

As a marina operator I do have challenges, the Forest Service also has challenges accommodating the public with these types of draw downs.

From 1990 to the passage of the Fee Demonstration Program enacted by Congress on a trial basis, I observed deferred maintenance on the forest's inventory. I also sensed a frustration at the local level of the Forest Service due to budgetary constraints.

With the passage of the Fee Demonstration Program, the Forest Service was aggressive and systematic in identifying, prioritizing and implementing upgrades around the lake.

I was personally involved in several projects due to the passage of the Fee Demonstration Program. The main project I was involved with was the Hazard Marker Program.

Imagine if you will, four rivers flowing through a mountainous region converging in one spot. Then up goes a dam, the tallest concrete spillway in the country, holding back waters until the lake is formed 600 feet higher at full pool.

Now drop the lake a foot a day during the summer season. Hills and ridges pop up daily with the lake level receding creating serious hazards.

We were averaging \$25000. a year in damages to our rental inventory per marina.

Working directly with Forest Service Staff, we developed a hazard marker that is relatively resilient to boat strikes and easy to install and maintain. Since that time, other lakes have mirrored our program implemented on Shasta by the Forest Service.

The results were extremely favorable: Boating accidents and vessel damage declined immediately. It is estimated that the Hazard Marker Program is saving boat owners around \$250,000. annually.

Some of the other improvements implemented as a result of the Fee Demonstration Program are:

- The construction of launch facilities to accommodate persons with disabilities
- Floating directional signs designed for lake level fluxuation
- Development of an aquaculture fish rearing program
- Construction of fuel breaks around 13 campgrounds and 6 launch ramps

Tourism is the second largest employer in our tri county area, second only to the medical industry. The resorts on Shasta Lake employ around 200 full time year round employees and the number crests over 500 employees in the summer season.

I ask for your consideration in the Shasta Lake Marina Bill as I feel it was an unintentional consequence not to be included when the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act was passed.

Thank you Honorable Rahall and committee members.