



GREATER NEWPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

555 SW Coast Highway • Newport, Oregon 97365-4934
(541) 265-8801 • FAX: (541) 265-5589 • 1-800-262-7844

www.newportchamber.org

E-mail: lorna@newportchamber.org

October 20th 2014

Adm Paul Zukunft
Commandant (CG-00)
US Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 2nd St. SW STOP 7000
Washington DC 20593-7000
Re: Scheduled Closure of Coast Guard Air Station, Newport Oregon

Dear Admiral Zukunft:

The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce is a 600 member strong organization serving the businesses and citizens of Newport and the surrounding economic region. We are organized to unite the efforts of the citizens in promoting the civic, commercial, agricultural, tourist, marine and industrial welfare of the City of Newport and its surrounding area.

We have always considered it a given that the men and women serving our local Coast Guard detachment are a welcome and integral part of our community. When it comes to service in our community, the Coast Guard distinguishes itself in many ways. From courageous actions to safeguard the many commercial and sport fishermen who frequent Yaquina Bay and the Pacific Ocean throughout the year to involvement in local Service Clubs, the Coast Guard is truly part of the fiber of our City, evidenced by our designation as a Coast Guard City USA. We recognize that the Coast Guard has made an exceptional difference in our City's unique quality of life.

Our primary local economic drivers are first-Commercial Fishing and second-Tourism. We are a deep water port and home of well over 200 commercial vessels, NOAA, and OSU Hatfield Marine Science center. While our city's population is about 10,000, our visitor count is over 2.5 million people each year. Our location on the central Oregon Coast with miles of beaches and craggy nooks, the Yaquina, Alsea, Depoe Bays and several other local waterways is the primary draw for most of our visitors. They partake in all aspects of water and beach related activities-fishing, surfing, climbing and diving to name a few. To say our waterways and surrounding land is well used and loved is an understatement.

With this of course comes the peril of safeguarding and protecting the lives of our fishing fleet, visitors and residents. The Pacific Ocean is a frigid and unforgiving body of water. Applying national standards when considering safety management is somewhat like comparing an apple to a zebra. Off our shore when dangers arise, minutes count-which unfortunately has been demonstrated time and time again. A simple day of playing on the beach, jetty's and rock formations can turn perilous or tragic. Ironically just after the announcement that we would no longer have local CG air service, there was a helo rescue of several people stranded on a rock as powerful waves crashed around them. A seemingly calm day with beautiful weather attracted thousands of people to our beaches, many of which were surprised when they witnesses 18 foot seas, which are not uncommon off our shore.

It would be tragic if the decision to cease and relocate the service comes to be. There is no doubt that lives will be lost as a direct result of air service not being close enough to rescue rather than recover victims.

We know that many have written and called regarding this decision. The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce joins them in urging you to reverse this decision and is willing to aid in seeking solutions that will save the air service for Newport and our surrounding area.

Sincerely,

Judy Kuhl

Judy Kuhl
Chamber Board President
555 SW Coast Hwy
Newport Oregon 97365

Lorna Davis

Lorna Davis
Executive Director
Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce
Newport Oregon 97365

Cc: Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley
Congressman Kurt Schrader
Representative David Gombert

Mayor Sandy Roumagoux-Newport
Ginny Goblirsch-Fishermans Wives
Kevin Greenwood-Port of Newport
Lincoln County Commissioners