



**Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
Tribal Council**

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October 15, 2014

R.T. Gromlich, Rear Admiral
U.S. Coast Guard
Commander, Thirteenth Coast Guard District
Seattle, WA 98174

Re: Closure of the USCG Air Facility in Newport, OR

Dear Admiral Gromlich,

On behalf of the Siletz Tribe, I am writing in support of the effort to retain the Search and Rescue helicopter and air facility in Newport, Oregon. Eliminating this facility could mean waiting an additional hour for helicopter assistance from Astoria and North Bend which are each 100 miles away.

In 1987 there was a recognized need for stationing a helicopter in Newport to address maritime emergencies and that need has grown significantly since then. There is considerable maritime activity in Newport and nearby coastal towns: Newport has a thriving commercial fishing industry and is the location for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's Pacific Marine Operations Center; International log shipments will start soon and the Port of Newport is working to enhance tourism by bringing in cruise ships; and this area of the coast includes some major attractions which draw many tourists to the central Oregon coast's public beaches—the Oregon Coast Aquarium and the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport and the Chinook Winds Hotel and Casino Resort in Lincoln City.

Given the current situation and imminent projected growth, the need for a Search and Rescue Air Facility in Newport is greater than ever. This was demonstrated most recently on October 11th when five tourists in Depoe Bay were rescued from rocks where they had been stranded by the incoming tide. The Depoe Bay Fire Chief was quoted as saying that in another 30 minutes these people would have been swept away. However, because there is an air facility in Newport, the Search and Rescue response time averted a tragedy.

The Tribe joins with the many other groups and individuals to urge that this facility stay open in light of the existing and the anticipated increase in maritime activity. The current location of the USCG Air Facility in Newport is essential for rapid response and rescue for maritime emergencies in Newport, as well as neighboring towns along the central Oregon Coast.

Sincerely,

Delores Pigsley
Tribal Chairman