



City of Waldport

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October 16, 2014

Admiral Paul F. Zukunft, Commandant
US Coast Guard
2100 2nd St. SW STOP 7000
Washington, DC 20593-7000

Dear Admiral Zukunft,

I am sending this letter at the request of the Waldport City Council, following a discussion at the October 9 Council meeting regarding the proposed closure of the helicopter rescue facility in Newport. The purpose of this letter is to add the support of the Waldport City Council to the request for reconsideration of this decision. As demonstrated by the most recent incident in Depoe Bay, where five teenagers were stranded on a rock at Fogarty Creek Beach, time is of the essence in this environment. As it was, at least one teenager was apparently unconscious and hypothermic, and this was with a response time of ten minutes. If the response was from North Bend rather than Newport, the scenario could have been far worse.

In Waldport, our concern is equally valid, given the fact that the Alsea Bay, a popular place for both tourists and locals to engage in fishing, clamming, crabbing and other recreational pursuits, is non-navigable to the Coast Guard boat response. Though our local Fire District has some water rescue capabilities, they are limited by the number of available personnel and equipment, and we all understand that minutes can mean the difference between life and death in the frigid waters surrounding our small community.

Additionally, many of our local citizens helped support the efforts of the Newport Fishermen's Wives and others to bring the helicopter here several decades ago. They are understandably upset and disappointed in what appears to be an arbitrary decision to now remove that service. They fear for the lives of their friends and families, and have asked their public officials to help ensure the helicopter

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remains where it belongs.

I plan on attending the meeting on October 20 at the Community College in Newport, and hope that the representatives from the Coast Guard will be receptive to the comments and suggestions of the community. We all firmly believe that there is no higher priority than the health, welfare and safety of our citizens. There must be other means of reducing costs, without endangering lives.

Sincerely,

Susan Woodruff, Mayor

c.c. Ron Wyden, U.S. Senator
Jeffrey Merkley, U.S. Senator
Kurt Schrader, U.S. Congressman
Arnie Roblan, State Senator
David Gomberg, State Representative
Lincoln County Board of Commissioners
Spencer Nebel, Newport City Manager
Rear Admiral R.T. Gromlich, USCG