

October 20, 2014

My name is Dave Marvin. I regret that I am unable to attend today's meeting, and thank Bill Montgomery for agreeing to share my comments with you. I am a fisheries biologist and data modeler, and live in Beaverton, Oregon. As a much younger man during the 1970s, I was a commercial fisherman in Newport. For five years I fished for salmon from my own troller, and crewed on other vessels year-round for albacore, salmon, black cod, crab, and flat fish. On my own boat, I twice received assistance from the Coast Guard's motor lifeboat, including one instance near the Yaquina River bar where the Coast Guard's rapid response likely saved my property and livelihood, and perhaps the lives of my crew member and myself. I have also known acquaintances, co-workers, and friends who were not as fortunate, and died at sea after issuing distress calls. Most of these men and women might have survived if rescue crews had been able to reach them in time.

My own fortunate rescue experience, and the unfortunate deaths of my comrades, make the Coast Guard's intention to close their Newport Air Station rescue operations a personal issue for me. Your Captain Trimper has said that this closure of an established rescue facility is "part of a larger shift in resources" and that rescue response times from Newport are likely to increase. This says to me that the Coast Guard has unilaterally decided to devalue the lives of mariners along the West Coast in order to shift their priorities to non-human elements of the Coast Guards's mission. This closure will not only increase the response time to disasters in the cold waters off the central Oregon coast, it will also impact the availability of air rescue resources from the stations in North Bend and Astoria, potentially affecting rescue efforts from California to Washington.

Yaquina Bay is now home to the largest commercial fishing fleet in Oregon and the research fleets for both Oregon State University and NOAA, and is a major port for both commercial shipping and numerous recreational boats. Closing the Coast Guard's Newport Air Station will put all of these mariners at increased risk of death. I trust that the Coast Guard will re-assess their decision to close the Air Station, and re-allocate the resources needed to maintain the Air Station's operations.

I want to thank the Newport Fishermen's Wives and Oregon's congressional delegates for providing this forum, and the Coast Guard for their belated but appreciated decision to attend this forum. Thank you all for this opportunity to share my comments.

Sincerely,
Dave Marvin