

RON WYDEN
OREGON

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

221 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5244

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

COMMITTEES:

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November 18, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

I am writing to inform you that I will object to any unanimous consent agreement in connection with the nomination of Rear Admiral Thomas P. Ostebo to be Vice Admiral and to explain why I feel compelled to take this action.

In September, the United States Coast Guard informed my office that it would close air facilities in Newport, Oregon and Charleston, South Carolina, effective December 1, 2014. The Coast Guard has given my office two reasons for this decision, the first being that it is necessary because of tighter budgets. It is not lost on me that sequestration imposes tough decisions on the Coast Guard and other federal agencies. At the same time, I refuse to accept the Coast Guard proposition that it cannot find the \$12 million necessary to keep both facilities open in a global budget of nearly \$10 billion.

The Coast Guard also informed my office that closing the air facility in Newport will not result in a loss of search-and-rescue capability because it has a surplus of assets in the region. As the Coast Guard has explained to us, it will still be able to meet the 2-hour search-and-rescue standard. As I have explained to the Coast Guard, I remain concerned about the appropriateness of this standard. The waters around Newport are cold and unpredictable and minutes can make all the difference between a successful rescue and a preventable tragedy.

Congressional delegations from Oregon and South Carolina have been working with Coast Guard officials to try to resolve this issue; I remain hopeful that the Coast Guard will offer a solution and that I will be able to withdraw my hold. In the meantime, I will object to any unanimous consent agreement to consider Mr. Ostebo's nomination. Thank you for your assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senate

911 NE 11TH AVENUE
SUITE 630
PORTLAND, OR 97232
(503) 326-7525

405 EAST 8TH AVE
SUITE 2020
EUGENE, OR 97401
(541) 431-0229

SAC ANNEX BUILDING
105 FIR ST
SUITE 201
LA GRANDE, OR 97850
(541) 962-7691

U.S. COURTHOUSE
310 WEST 6TH ST
ROOM 118
MEDFORD, OR 97501
(541) 858-5122

THE JAMISON BUILDING
131 NW HAWTHORNE AVE
SUITE 107
BEND, OR 97701
(541) 330-9142

707 13TH ST, SE
SUITE 285
SALEM, OR 97301
(503) 589-4555

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