

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Newport Fishermen's Wives, Inc., the City of Newport, Lincoln County and the Port of Newport are filing a lawsuit in federal court in Eugene Tuesday morning challenging the Coast Guard's announced closure of the Newport Air Station on December 15, 2014. "Following the tragic loss of several fishermen in the early 1980s, the Newport Fishermen's Wives fought to secure the Coast Guard rescue helicopter in 1987 and now we're fighting to save it after 27 years of outstanding service," said Jennifer Stevenson, the organization president.

The lawsuit alleges that the Coast Guard failed to follow its own procedures in decommissioning a longstanding facility that has provided the only fast response rescue helicopter serving Oregon's central coast. Newport is home to the largest commercial fishing fleet in Oregon and attracts millions of visitors annually, some of whom require rescue in the ocean or on rocky cliffs.

"The law clearly requires the Coast Guard to follow a detailed process that examines the impacts of decommissioning the Newport Air Station on the environment and public safety," said Mike Haglund, the Portland attorney representing plaintiffs. "The role of the Coast Guard helicopter in saving dozens of lives over the last two decades and minimizing pollution threats from overturned vessels was not considered by the Coast Guard in making its closure decision. That violates the National Environmental Policy Act and justifies issuing an injunction against decommissioning of the air facility."

Plaintiffs are requesting a hearing on their motion for an injunction before the December 15 closure deadline. That hearing will occur in federal court in Eugene.

**There will be a press conference involving representatives of the plaintiffs at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 25, at Newport City Hall in the council chambers. The address is 169 SW Coast Hwy, Newport, OR 97365.**

For further information, contact Michelle Longo-Eder at (541) 270-1161, Ginny Goblirsch at (541) 272-1385 or Mike Haglund at (503) 358-1281.