



CITY OF NEHALEM

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DEPT OF

NOV 14 2014

LAND CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

November 12, 2014

Rear Admiral Richard T. Gromlich
Commander
U.S. Coast Guard Thirteenth District
915 Second Ave., Room 3590
Seattle, WA 98174

Dear Admiral Gromlich:

The Nehalem City Council, at their November 10, 2014 meeting, asked me to write this letter stating their opposition to the proposed closure of the helicopter Air Facility at Newport, Oregon. This proposed closure will have a huge impact on both the north and south Oregon Coasts. The remaining Air Stations in Astoria, Oregon and North Bend, Oregon would not be able to adequately and quickly respond to situations in the mid-coast area. The longer response times would result in marine casualties and/or more serious injuries. The water temperatures off the Oregon coast are generally between 50-59 degrees Fahrenheit year round. At these temperatures a victim's survival time in the ocean is measured in minutes. Adding an additional 45 minutes in response time could change a USCG flight from a lifesaving mission to one of recovering bodies.

In the ports of Newport and Depoe Bay, charter boat operators carry hundreds of passengers each day. Because of this response time is critical and is a huge issue. In addition, Lincoln County has the most visited coastal state park in Oregon serving over one million visitors annually. These non-boater recreational users lives, in the event of an accident, are also at risk with a delayed response time and further add to the burden of the other local emergency responders who depend on helicopter operations support.

In addition, the Air Facility at Newport is outside the tsunami inundation zone in the event of a major earthquake, unlike Astoria and North Bend. Since air support is going to be critical in the event of a major earthquake it would seem to provide additional reasons to retain the Air Facility at Newport.

We understand that there are budget reasons for this proposed closure, however the Council feels that you cannot put a price on saving human lives and that the loss of a single life that could have been saved with a faster response time is too high a price to pay. Please let us

know what can be done to encourage Congress to fully fund the search and rescue needs of the USCG.

The Nehalem City Council unanimously supported at its November 10, 2014 meeting that the USCG readiness for missions continue to include the helicopter Air Facility at Newport, Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dale Shafer".

Dale Shafer
City Manager

Cc: Admiral Paul F. Zukunft
Governor John A. Kitzhaber
Oregon Congressional Delegation
Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council