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Admiral Paul Zukunft
Commandant (CG-00) US Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 2nd St. SW STOP 7000
Washington DC 20593-7000
re: Newport Oregon air facility

06 October 2014

Dear Admiral Zukunft,

As a former commercial fisherman and merchant marine, I am deeply disturbed by the recent decision by the United States Coast Guard to close the air facility in Newport Oregon. This will leave the home of the Oregon coast's largest commercial fishing fleet as the only deep-water port in the state without dedicated helicopter support. Ironically, the closure is to take place on the first day of commercial Dungeness crab fishing, the most dangerous fishery on the West Coast.

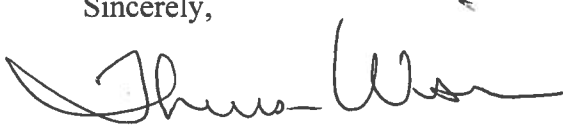
In a statement from the US Coast Guard in Seattle, we were told that you could "meet all national search and rescue standards from Air Station North Bend." National standards are not sufficient for one of the world's most dangerous occupations in some of the most treacherous waters on the planet. A helicopter from North Bend or Astoria will take at least an additional hour to arrive - hypothermia begins in minutes. We can't afford minutes, let alone an hour. It also takes an hour away from the time the helicopter crew has for the actual search and rescue operation. Although locating equipment may be much improved, individuals in our fishing industry cannot afford personal EPIRBS - if a boat goes down, the crew cannot be located by anything but visuals.

If we have to wait for a helicopter to arrive from North Bend, there will most certainly be fatalities. In the past twelve months, the helicopter in Newport was dispatched 44 times. I'm told this is an average number of deployments. Already in 2014, five lives have been saved as a direct result of the helicopter.

Commercial and sport fisheries are not the only industries dependent on the immediate availability of this helicopter. Oregon State University's Research Vessel *Oceanus* and five NOAA vessels are served by USCG Station Yaquina Bay. Research vessels from around the country come to our area for research. In addition, the helicopter has responded to logging emergencies and other search and rescue operations that are not marine-based. Our community needs this resource.

Please, find another way to balance your budget. Our community has lost enough lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theresa Wisner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "W".

Theresa Wisner

Copies: Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Jeff Merkley, Representative Kurt Schrader,
Representative David Gombert