



Northwest National Marine Renewable Energy Center-OSU  
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October 19, 2014

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

Dear Rear Admiral Gromlich,

As Director of the Northwest National Marine Renewable Energy Center (NNMREC) at Oregon State University (OSU), I am writing to you to express my concern about the recent announcement of the planned closure of the US Coast Guard Air Station in Newport, Oregon.

NNMREC's mission is to facilitate the commercialization of marine energy technology, inform regulatory and policy decisions, and close key gaps in scientific understanding. NNMREC works closely with a variety of stakeholders, including device developers, community members, ocean users, federal and state regulators, and government officials, to conduct research about wave energy, provide test sites for prototype devices, and assist developers with planning and permitting activities.

NNMREC's Pacific Marine Energy Center (PMEC) provides access to a variety of marine energy converter testing facilities located around the Pacific Northwest region. In Oregon, PMEC's open water, non-grid connected test facility, the North Energy Test Site (NETS) is located off Yaquina Head, just north of Newport. The planning and permitting process for a larger, grid-connected test site (PMEC's South Energy Test Site, or SETS) is currently under way. The SETS will be located approximately 8-miles offshore from the Newport Municipal Airport and will be a year-round operation. When completed in early 2017, SETS will serve as the primary, utility-scale wave energy test facility in the US, with the capability of accommodating up to 20 wave energy conversion devices with a combined output of up to 20 MW.

With a large, active commercial fishing fleet, numerous charter and recreational boaters, a flourishing tourist industry, OSU's Hatfield Marine Science Center (HMSC) and Ship Operations, NOAA's Pacific Marine Operation Center, the Ocean Observatories Initiative and our existing NETS facility, Newport is already a hub of maritime activity.

Over the next few years, the level of ocean-related activity is set to increase significantly with the Port of Newport International Terminal development and the current expansion of research and educational opportunities at HMSC. The development of PMEC SETS has the potential to contribute dramatically to this increase. It is expected that SETS will be operational for 25 years with four test berths available to national and international developers interested in testing wave energy conversion devices. Up to 20 devices could be tested at SETS at any time and will require frequent monitoring, maintenance and servicing. It is important to note that these are large devices (weighing hundreds to thousands of tons, and measuring up to several hundred feet in length) that will be deployed year-round in the treacherous waters off Newport. In addition to the device testing activities, environmental regulations will require a greatly

increased level of environmental monitoring in and around the test facility, which will further increase the level of marine activities based out of Newport.

NNMREC, our associated faculty, students and industry partners greatly appreciate the effort that the US Coast Guard expends to fulfill its critical mission to protect the Nation's maritime interests and we understand that resources are limited. However, with the existing and increasing level of maritime activity centered on the Port of Newport, coupled with the fact that the waters off Oregon can be so treacherous, we feel that the proposed relocation of the Newport-based US Coast Guard Search and Rescue helicopter will jeopardize the safety of the local ocean users. We therefore strongly urge you to reconsider the plan to close the US Coast Guard Air Station in Newport.

Sincerely,



Belinda A. Batten, PhD  
Director

