

October 10, 2014

Re: U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Facility, Newport OR

Dear Sen. Merkley:

The Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen and diversify the economy in our county. Our organization has concern over the closure of the United States Coast Guard Air Station Facility located at the Newport Municipal Airport and the impact on safety along the central Oregon coast.

The use of the facility affects at least 5 distinct sectors of our economy:

1. Lincoln County is the home of the largest commercial fishing fleet on the Oregon coast.
2. Our maritime culture also consists of research vessels, which represent a growing sector. OSU vessels, NOAA home port, and visiting vessels account for active port usage for both Newport and Toledo, including the emerging field of marine renewable energy test sites (all federal investments).
3. The charter fleet for sports fishing accounts for a major part of Depoe Bay's economic base, as well as other ports.
4. Additionally in tourism, there is an active small boat sports fishing and near shore recreation market that is served throughout Lincoln County, including our rivers and estuaries. Deep or rushing waters necessitate rescue by air.
5. Marine commerce is anticipated to increase out of the Port of Newport's International Terminal. We will respond to markets for lumber, as in fishing, that may increase dramatically from year to year.

6. Responding to disaster, homeland security issues off the coast, and the geography and high attraction of our beachfront, all indicate a need for fast Coast Guard response.

We appreciate and count on the U.S. Coast Guard Helicopter for rescues and recovery emergencies. Therefore in the interest of our central Oregon coast area, it is an important necessity to continue operations of the Newport Air Facility.

We ask that you reconsider closure and make the United States Coast Guard Air Station Facility, Newport Oregon a permanent facility.

Sincerely,

Caroline Bauman  
Executive Director