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Subject: Public Comment Agenda Item B.1
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November 5, 2014

Agenda Item B.1

Madame Chair, Members of the Pacific Council,

On October 2nd, 2014, the community of Newport, OR was notified by a letter from the 13th District Commander of the Coast Guard, Richard T. Gromlich, that effective November 30th, 2014 the USCG air facility would be closed and the rescue helicopter stationed in Newport, OR would be eliminated. The Newport helicopter is to be first moved south to North Bend, more than an hour's flight time from Newport. The decision by the Coast Guard Commandant to cut this air facility is particularly shocking in that he failed to engage the public in any public process prior to his decision. This reckless decision by the Coast Guard Commandant will take effect at the start of the Dungeness crab season, identified by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health as one of the deadliest in the nation.

In the frigid waters of the Pacific, an hour in the water will result in a significant increase in fatalities. Hypothermia sets in, limbs become immobilized, and drowning occurs. Recently, there were 5 tourists rescued from the rocks from Fogarty Creek State Park. Without the swift assistance of the Newport based U.S. Coast Guard helicopter, those tourists had less than an hour before the waves and tide change washed them from the rocks.

And it gets even worse. Two of the helicopters which currently rotate out of North Bend are going to be transferred to another region of the country (or dismantled for parts). This leaves the cold waters of the central Oregon coast with severely diminished fast response helicopter recovery assets.

The helicopter facility in Newport, OR is essential to the health, safety and well-being of all our coastal ocean users. Fishermen, commercial and recreational, ply our waters. Families with children, residents and tourists, stroll the beaches and climb on rocks. Surfers and kayakers ride the waves. Ocean researchers, from state and federal agencies, private enterprise, and universities, venture out to sea. In addition, loggers, deep in the woods, harvest natural resources, and need helo resources because of their inaccessible locations. Our first responders rely on the US CG helicopter in assisting in ocean rescues, and as back up for their own crews.

Despite requests from community leaders and the public in a town hall meeting on October 20th, we were informed by Rear Admiral Richard T. Gromlich that the decision to eliminate the Newport air facility had been made, and would not be changed. Oregon's congressional

delegation then spoke with the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Paul Zunkunft, and received a two week reprieve from the closure, which is now scheduled to happen on December 15, 2014.

On behalf of Newport Fishermen's Wives, we ask you to write a letter to Admiral Paul Zunkunft and notify him of your opposition to the closure of the air station in Newport, OR.

Set forth below are a **sample** of the letters and resolutions of support from various elected representatives, agencies, organizations, and individuals, opposed to the elimination of the CG helicopter air facility. We ask that you join in this effort to keep the helicopter air facility in Newport.

Letters of Support from Oregon's Congressional Delegation to the Coast Guard:

<http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//coast%20guard%20letter.pdf>

[http://www.portofnewport.com/user-](http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//14.10.22%20SL%20OR%20Delegation%20to%20Admiral%20Zukunft%20Newport%20Air%20Facility.pdf)

[files//14.10.22%20SL%20OR%20Delegation%20to%20Admiral%20Zukunft%20Newport%20Air%20Facility.pdf](http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//14.10.22%20SL%20OR%20Delegation%20to%20Admiral%20Zukunft%20Newport%20Air%20Facility.pdf)

Letters of support from following individuals and organizations:

Port of Alsea, Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council, Governor John Kitzhaber, Surfrider Foundation, Midwater Trawlers Cooperative, Newport Fishermen's Wives, Michele Longo Eder, Ginny Goblirsch, Gahlsdorf Logging, Associated Oregon Loggers, Depoe Bay Fire Department, Sara Skamser, Newport Fire Department, Seal Rock Fire Department, Tillamook County Fire Defense Board representing Nehalem Bay Fire & Rescue, Rockaway Beach Fire Department, Garibaldi Fire Dept., Bay City Fire Dept., Tillamook Fire District, Netarts-Oceanside Fire District, Nestucca Fire Dist., No. Lincoln County Fire District.

<http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//supportletters40.pdf>

Resolution , Letters from City of Newport, Waldport, Depoe Bay, Lincoln City

[http://www.portofnewport.com/user-](http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//City%20of%20Newport%20Resolution%20Number%203692.pdf)

[files//City%20of%20Newport%20Resolution%20Number%203692.pdf](http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//City%20of%20Newport%20Resolution%20Number%203692.pdf)

http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//DOC001_00003.pdf

[http://www.portofnewport.com/user-](http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//USCG%20Air%20Support%20Ltr%20Depoe%20Bay.pdf)

[files//USCG%20Air%20Support%20Ltr%20Depoe%20Bay.pdf](http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//USCG%20Air%20Support%20Ltr%20Depoe%20Bay.pdf)

http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//DOC000_00002.pdf

Resolutions from Lincoln County , Tillamook County, Coos County

<http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//CountyRes.pdf>

http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//DOC001_00002.pdf

http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//DOC001_00002.pdf

Petition signed by over 16,000 people to keep helicopter in Newport

http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/save-the-newport-rescue?source=s.fwd&r_by=4037606

Letter in support from Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation

<http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//YBEF-Coast%20Guard.pdf>

Letter of Support, Newport Fishermen's Wives

<http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//10.23.14%20Newport%20Fishermen's%20Wives%20Letter%20to%20Adm.%20Zukunft.pdf>

Letter of Support, Dockside Charters

<http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//20141103111236.pdf>

Letter of Support OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center, Director Dr. Bob Cowen

<http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//Letter%20to%20Coast%20Guard%20re%20Helicopter%20Support.pdf>

Letter of Support Dr. Shelby Walker Director, Oregon Sea Grant

http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//USCG_Newport_helicopter_OSG_102814.pdf

Letter of Support Dr Belinda Batten-NMMREC

http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//USCG_letter_BAtten.pdf

Letter of Support Confederated Tribes of the Siletz

http://www.portofnewport.com/user-files//DOC000_00006.pdf

Letter of Support from Ginny Goblirsch

<http://www.portofnewport.com/save-our-air-station.php>

Additional letters of support, written petitions, video of town hall meetings and other public comments in support of retaining the helicopter are located

at <http://www.portofnewport.com/save-our-air-station.php> and by this reference, incorporated into this public comment.

Submitted on behalf of Newport Fishermen's Wives

Jennifer Stevenson, President

Ginny Goblirsch

Heather Mann

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Newport Fishermen's Wives

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#savethehelo
