

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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OCT 21 2014

The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your recent letter outlining your concerns over the closure of Air Facility Newport. I sincerely understand your concerns and appreciate the opportunity to convey my reasons for the closure. As you know, we value the tremendous support we receive from the communities where we work and live, so I want to ensure you know the Coast Guard remains fully committed to the people of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. We will continue to provide for the safety and security of the growing Port of Newport and maintain Search and Rescue (SAR) response capability across the region.

After careful analysis of our SAR system capabilities and SAR case trends along the Oregon coast, we found overlapping asset coverage exists in this area. Improved ship, helicopter and communication capabilities enable the Coast Guard to execute the SAR mission with greater agility and efficiency. Closure of Air Facility Newport will not impact the Coast Guard's ability to meet national SAR planning and response standards.

With limited resources, the Coast Guard must always seek to optimize our assets through the continuous evaluation of operational capabilities and mission requirements. As part of this evaluation, the FY14 President's Budget requested closure of Air Facilities in Newport, OR, and Charleston, SC, and the Coast Guard received authorization in the FY 14 Appropriations Act to move forward with these closures.

I have absolute trust in Admiral Rick Gromlich and his operational commanders in Coast Guard District 13 to continue to evaluate the risks in the Pacific Northwest and make adjustments to ensure mariner safety is our absolute top priority. I remain committed to addressing any additional concerns or questions you may have.

Thank you for your continued support for the Coast Guard and its mission. My Senate Liaison Office at (202) 224-2913 would be pleased to respond to any further questions your staff may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul F. Zukunft".

Paul F. Zukunft
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant