

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 8, 2014

Admiral Paul F. Zukunft  
Commandant  
U.S. Coast Guard  
2100 2nd St SW STOP 7000  
Washington Dc 20593-7000

Dear Admiral Zukunft:

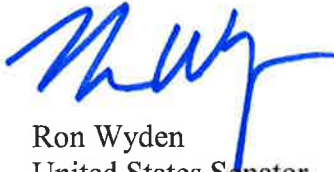
We write to convey our strong opposition to the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) decision to close the Air Facility in Newport, Oregon, effective December 2014. Closing this facility would threaten the safety of mariners who make their living in the waters around Newport and we urge you to reverse this decision.

Marine activity is synonymous with life in and around the city of Newport, and it has continued to grow since the USCG established daily air presence there. Newport is home to one of Oregon's three deep draft ports, the state's largest commercial fishing fleet, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific fleet, the Oregon State University research vessels, in addition to a robust recreational and sport fishing industry. The Port of Newport recently completed a multi-million dollar rebuilding of its international terminal, which is expected to increase international shipping traffic. Newport fisherman landed over 80 million pounds of fish in 2012, a three-fold increase from the 1992 haul, and Newport saw a fifteen-fold increase in the number of sports fishing trips for Albacore tuna between 2001 and 2012. The USCG rightly recognized the importance of having search and rescue assets so close to such a hub of marine activity in 1987—which is why the decision to reduce those same services with today's even larger hub is troubling. Clearly now is not the time to be cutting search and rescue services.

We also have concerns about the USCG process for making and announcing this decision. The USCG told some of our offices in April 2014 that this facility would remain open through 2015. A unilateral decision to close the facility in December would be an obvious departure from that previous commitment, and we are frustrated that our offices were not consulted at any stage during the process. More concerning still is that this recent decision seems to have been made without consulting the fleet, the community, or any local stakeholders. Since the USCG has designated Newport a "Coast Guard City"—a program to highlight the "need for understanding between the Coast Guard and the local community"—we are frankly surprised at what appears to a total lack of consultation regarding this decision.

We join the Oregon Coast community in expressing our admiration and support for the USCG and its mission. We also believe strongly that removing search and rescue assets from Newport would only heighten the chance of a very preventable tragedy. In the spirit of the USCG's long partnership with Newport and Oregon's coastal communities, we urge you to reconsider this decision.


Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



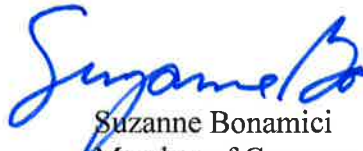
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator




Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress