



North Lincoln Fire & Rescue District #1
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May 11, 2014

House Democratic Leader Val Hoyle
Chair of House Committee on Rules

Re: HJM 20

This is a letter in support of House Joint Memorial 20 sponsored by Representatives Gomborg, McKeown, Senator Roblan, Representatives Boone, Krieger, and Senators Johnson, Kruse, Whitsett.

As Chief of a fire district whose water rescue team relies largely upon the assistance of USCG air support, I was greatly concerned to learn of the proposed removal of their helicopter from Newport. As well as greatly reducing the potential ocean hazards to our local fleet of fishermen and residents and visitors to the Coast who enjoy boating and water recreation, we as a department depend upon them to assist our efforts. Their flight crew has a much greater vantage point from which to spot victims in the open water. Coordinating their efforts with ours leads to more frequent and successful rescues. It is also our policy not to launch rescue watercraft in high surf conditions and/or severe weather until we have visual confirmation of the victim from the USCG helicopter.

We have trained with the Coast Guard and have come to rely upon our USCG partners to be our guardians and factor into our risk assessment prior to engaging a rescue. This vital air resource assists in our determination to complete our mission in water rescue and often aids in areas that surface teams or water rescue personnel cannot reach in coves, rocks, or beyond our safe operational reach.

The helicopter also assists us with land search and rescue efforts, steep angle cliff rescues and/or locating seriously injured people in difficult terrain and transporting them to safety.

The Coast Guard's air support in Newport plays a critical role in the preservation of life along this geographically hazardous coastline, and I would not like to see the lives of local residents and visitors be put in jeopardy with its removal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Baker".

Don Baker, Fire Chief
North Lincoln Fire & Rescue District #1