

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Fiscal: No Fiscal Impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 05/28/15

Action: Be Adopted.

Meeting Dates: 05/28

Vote:

Yeas: 4 - Beyer, Burdick, Ferrioli, Rosenbaum

Exc: 1 - Boquist

Prepared By: Erin Seiler, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Urges Congress to fund and maintain United States Coast Guard Air Facility at Newport, Oregon, in perpetuity.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Extreme and unique conditions of Oregon Coast
- Commercial and recreational use of Oregon Coast
- National efforts to maintain funding of U.S. Coast Guard Air Facility
- Community support about importance of the Air Facility
- Importance of helicopter in rescue situations

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

House Joint Memorial 20 urges Congress to fund and maintain the United States Coast Guard Air Facility at Newport, Oregon, in perpetuity.

Since 1987, the U.S. Coast Guard command has announced its intention to close Air Facility Newport in September 2014 for financial reasons. Should Air Facility Newport close, more than one hour of travel would be required for a rescue helicopter from a U.S. Coast Guard air station in Astoria or North Bend to reach areas of the central coast.

According to a recent Surfrider Foundation report, from 2007 to 2013, a total of 159 lives were saved by the U.S. Coast Guard in the waters off of Newport and 3,780 lives were assisted. The U.S. Coast Guard also provides emergency rescue services to loggers and foresters who labor in the remote, mountainous, rugged Coast Range.

The closure of the facility in Newport could threaten the safety of mariners and all others who enjoy the Oregon central coast, as a result of the delay in reaching people in distress.

HJM 20 requests that the Congress of the United States of America authorize and appropriate adequate funding to the U.S. Coast Guard to maintain the U.S. Coast Guard Air Facility Newport in perpetuity.