

House Joint Memorial 20

Sponsored by Representatives GOMBERG, MCKEOWN, Senator ROBLAN; Representatives BOONE, KRIEGER, Senators JOHNSON, KRUSE, WHITSETT

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

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

JOINT MEMORIAL

1
2 To the President of the United States, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard and the
3 Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assem-
4 bled:

5 We, your memorialists, the Seventy-eighth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in leg-
6 islative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

7 Whereas Oregon borders the Pacific Ocean, which is both beautiful and treacherous; and

8 Whereas Oregon's commercial, charter and recreational ocean and bay fisheries are a large and
9 important component of Oregon's coastal economies; and

10 Whereas over 250 commercial boats, and thousands more recreational and charter boats, ply the
11 waters off the central coast of Oregon each year; and

12 Whereas offshore fishing is an implicitly dangerous activity; and

13 Whereas vessels occasionally sink or capsize, and mariners are at risk of falling overboard; and

14 Whereas millions of tourists visit the Oregon coast annually, and a number of them find them-
15 selves in distress on beaches or ocean cliffs; and

16 Whereas surfing, body boarding and kayaking are popular recreational activities along the
17 coast; and

18 Whereas the average ocean temperature off the central coast of Oregon ranges between 49 and
19 55 degrees Fahrenheit; and

20 Whereas United States Coast Guard sources indicate that an overboard mariner can become
21 functionally disabled in less than 30 minutes in water at these temperatures, with increasing risk
22 of death the longer an individual remains immersed; and

23 Whereas Newport is one of the top 20 commercial fishing ports in the United States and is
24 second in the nation for recreational ocean fishing; and

25 Whereas Newport is a major hub for marine research and education and the home port of the
26 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration west coast fleet and the Oregon State University
27 research vessel, as well as the destination of many visiting research vessels; and

28 Whereas since 1987, the United States Coast Guard has maintained a search and rescue heli-
29 copter presence at Air Facility Newport, based at Newport Municipal Airport, as the result of the
30 deaths of three Newport fishers; and

31 Whereas according to a recent Surfrider Foundation report, from 2007 to 2013, a total of 159

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 lives were saved by the United States Coast Guard in the waters off of Newport and 3,780 lives were
2 assisted; and

3 Whereas the United States Coast Guard also provides emergency rescue services to loggers and
4 foresters who labor in the remote, mountainous, rugged Coast Range; and

5 Whereas the men and women of the United States Coast Guard are held in the highest esteem
6 and regard by Oregonians for their courage, dedication and intrepidity in the cause of saving lives;
7 and

8 Whereas the United States Coast Guard command announced its intention in September 2014 to
9 close Air Facility Newport for financial reasons; and

10 Whereas should Air Facility Newport close, more than one hour of travel would be required for
11 a rescue helicopter from a United States Coast Guard air station in Astoria or North Bend to reach
12 areas of the central coast; and

13 Whereas Air Facility Newport is the only United States Coast Guard facility in Oregon that is
14 not located in a tsunami inundation zone; and

15 Whereas the maritime community on the Oregon coast, most notably the Newport Fishermen's
16 Wives, rallied around the cause of saving Air Facility Newport and successfully advocated for the
17 facility to remain open through the end of 2015; and

18 Whereas the United States Coast Guard budget for 2016 indicates that Air Facility Newport will
19 be closed despite the one-year delay; and

20 Whereas the closure of the United States Coast Guard Air Facility Newport will be a grave
21 threat to the safety of Oregon mariners and all others who enjoy the Oregon central coast; now,
22 therefore,

23 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

24 That we, the members of the Seventy-eighth Legislative Assembly, respectfully request that the
25 Congress of the United States of America authorize and appropriate adequate funding to the United
26 States Coast Guard to maintain the United States Coast Guard Air Facility Newport in perpetuity;
27 and be it further

28 Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to
29 the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Commandant
30 of the United States Coast Guard and to each member of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

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