

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 4, 2009

Rear Admiral Jonathan W. Bailey, NOAA
Director, NOAA Corps
Director, Office of Marine & Aviation Operations
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Admiral Bailey:

We write today to urge you to select Newport, Oregon as the future home port for NOAA's Pacific fleet.

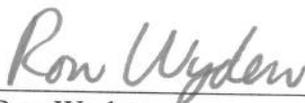
Newport has many advantages that will make it the ideal site for the fleet on the Pacific coast, perhaps the most important of which is its convenient location for the fleet. The Port of Newport is the only candidate that is centrally located along the west coast, allowing for easy access to the north and south ends of the West Coast. The Newport piers are minutes from the open ocean, which would maximize sea time for the fleet.

Newport is a center for world class oceanic research. Oregon State University's (OSU) Hatfield Marine Science Center (HMSC) is located there. OSU is a federally designated NOAA Sea Grant University that is home to the O.H. Hinsdale Wave Research Lab and will be the future home of the Northwest National Marine Renewable Energy Center, slated to begin construction in 2010. The Center is also home to OSU's Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station and houses three different NOAA programs: an element of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory.

The concentration of agencies with an interest in ocean research and the strong collaborative relationship between OSU and these partners make Newport uniquely qualified as home port for the NOAA fleet. Much of the collaborative research with NOAA is fostered by a NOAA-University Cooperative Institute for Marine Resources Studies (CIMRS), which has been located at the HMSC for 26 years. Also located on the HMSC campus is the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and the US Department of Agriculture. This concentration of knowledge is especially important for the future as our nation will need to adapt quickly to rapidly changing oceanic issues. The effects of such changes have recently been proven in three presidentially declared Salmon disasters in the last four years and the Groundfish fishery movement to Individual Fishing Quotas.

Given the rare concentration of oceanic expertise available through the many research facilities located in Newport, we feel it offers NOAA's Pacific fleet benefits that no other location can provide. We appreciate the time that you and your staff have taken to consider Oregon as the next home for NOAA's Pacific fleet and we urge your full and favorable review of this proposal. Please contact our offices if we can assist in any way.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator