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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
November 10, 2010

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Senator Ron Wyden Briefed on the NOAA MOC-P and International Terminal Projects

NEWPORT – Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore) met Friday afternoon at the NOAA Marine Operations Center-Pacific site with Port of Newport Commissioners, Port staff, the Governor's staff and members of the construction and project management firms. Port Commission President Ginny Goblirsch briefed the senator on the progress made to date on the NOAA and International Terminal projects. Wyden last visited the NOAA project site in June 2010 when he attended the ground breaking ceremony.

During the hour-long visit, Wyden toured NOAA's 5.5 acre site including the two-story administrative office building and nearby warehouse. Brad Nile, Senior Project Manager with Andersen/West Coast Contractors JV, the project's Construction Manager / General Contractor (CM/GC), led the tour and provided a description of the work in progress and the schedule to complete the project in time for NOAA's May 1, 2011 occupancy. Nile said approximately 60 workers were presently on site and construction crew numbers are expected to grow considerably in the near future when more trades will be working on the buildings' interior finishes.

During the briefing, Commission President Goblirsch noted the tremendous spirit of the project's design and construction teams and was very complementary of the federal and state regulatory permitting agencies that are pulling out all the stops to process the project's last and possibly most significant permit for the in-water work. She expressed her concern over the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) time required and methodologies used to process its review of the permit application, however.

Goblirsch said her fellow commissioners and others close to the project were extremely frustrated over the seemingly endless amounts of documentation NMFS has required for the NOAA and Terminal projects which appears to be above and beyond the normal review process. Goblirsch told the senator the in-water permit was expected by November 1, 2010 and the delay is costing the Port thousands of additional public dollars. Contractors will have to scramble to complete the dredging and pile driving once the permit is issued, now expected by November 11, 2010.

The senator's attention was turned to the Port's International Terminal project directly across Yaquina Bay from the NOAA site. She had the same positive comments for the federal and state agencies and the same frustration for the in-water permit application review. Like NOAA's, the Terminal project's in-water permit was forecast to be issued on November 1, 2010, however it likely won't be ready until the end of November. Wyden was told the Natt

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McDougall Company, the project's CM/GC, has slowed work considerably until the permit releases. Should the permit not be released until December, McDougal will be hard-pressed for sufficient time to complete the pile driving work.

To date, the Port has spent almost \$1 million for each project's engineering and scientific documentation and permitting fees required to secure the in-water work permit for NOAA MOC-P project. The federal and state agencies have been in close communication throughout the entire design process this past year.

Following the meeting and into this week, Senator Wyden's office has been applying pressure on NMFS to "do whatever it takes" to complete its work. NMFS released its Biological Opinion on the NOAA project on Tuesday, Nov. 9th which was reviewed by the state agencies before the US Army Corps of Engineers released the permit late Wednesday afternoon, November 10, 2010. The in-water permit allows work only between November 1 and February 15 of each year.

Commissioner Goblirsch told Senator Wyden both projects have created and will retain local jobs and development opportunities for future economic growth. She said the Port of Newport is committed to protecting Yaquina Bay while it meets its mission to promote and support projects and programs in cooperation with other community organizations and businesses which will create new jobs and increase community economic development.

For more information about the project, contact General Manager Don Mann at the Port of Newport, 541-265-7758, or visit the Port's website at www.portofnewport.com.

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