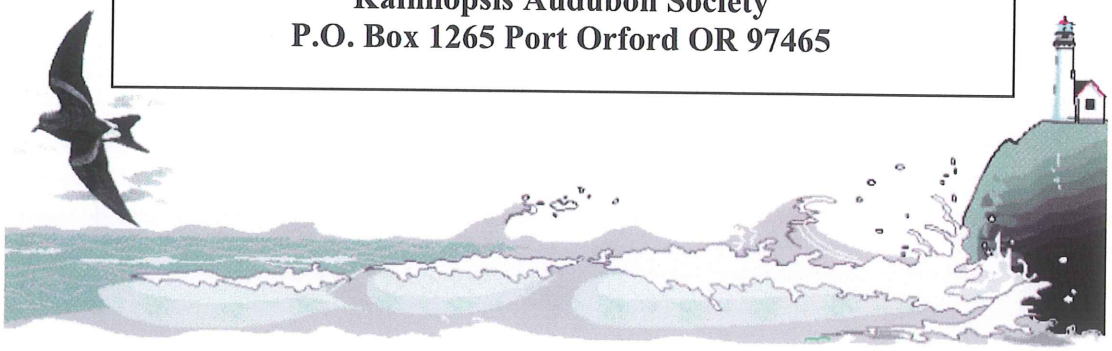
Kalmiopsis Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1265 Port Orford OR 97465



April 27, 2011

Curry County Commissioners
P.O. Box 746
Gold Beach, OR 97444

Dear Commissioners Itzen, Rhodes, and Waddle:

We request that this letter be included in the record of your April 27 Commissioners' meeting under the agenda item dealing with the Cape Blanco Airport and the State Department of Aviation Board.

Kalmiopsis Audubon has 170 local members who are concerned about the health and future of Curry County.

We believe that the proposal to assume ownership of the Cape Blanco Airport is at this time misguided and unwise, and we urge you to withhold action on this agenda item at least until full public notification, public understanding, and public opportunity for comment are realized. None of this has occurred, and the nominal public notification of this April 27 meeting does not change that fact.

According to the proposal, county general funds are to be spent as a result of the county taking ownership, which is being advanced without public knowledge or understanding. Given our county's dire financial straits, we believe that the commissioners' commitment to this additional expense is unconscionable at this time, that relevant financial obligations of the county will be impossible to honor, and that the financial obligations are grossly understated in the proposal.

While individual commissioners have assured us that full public disclosure, participation, and opportunity for comment would be a hallmark of any plans regarding the airport, no such opportunities have surfaced, and now, with scarcely any notice whatsoever, we see in the agenda for your meeting that you are seeking to make a formal proposal to the Aviation Department Board. This state of affairs seriously undermines the credibility of the commission, and reflects poorly on the commissioners' judgment to proceed.

We have further substantive concerns about the proposal, including the financial impact on our county, the reliability of the airport for emergency services and private use, the commissioners' plans for development of the area, the effects on nearby private land and agriculture, encroachment on state park lands, and other matters. All need to be given careful consideration that is completely absent.

For several months we have urged Commissioner Rhodes to avoid the error of neglecting to adequately involve the people of Curry County in the decisions that could affect the future of our county government, our fiscal stability, our land, our agriculture, and our other resources. To avoid this error, we now urge the board to table action on this item until there has been proper public involvement on this issue.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tim Palmer

Board member,
For the board and membership of the Kalmiopsis Audubon Society

cc:
Mitch Swecker, State Aviation Department
Jerry Herbage
Joel Summer, Curry County Reporter
Scott Graves and Val Corley, Curry Coastal Pilot
Matt Hall, Port Orford News
Evan Kramer, Port Orford Today