

Oregon Department of Aviation
3040 25th Street SE
Salem, Oregon 97302-1125

April 25, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to you today to request that you do NOT transfer any responsibility or oversight of the Cape Blanco Airport to Curry County. I have spent my entire adult life in the emergency response and preparedness fields (over 36 years in the Fire Service, and 10 years in Emergency Management), and I recognize the valuable asset that the airport provides. That airport is the only one in Curry County that can support large transport aircraft. It is a 5,100 foot strip, 150 feet wide, and is designed for large, heavy aircraft. It was built during the World War 2 era as an emergency landing strip for B-29 aircraft flying from Boeing Aircraft in Seattle to Alameda Air Station in California, where they were outfitted and sent across the Pacific Ocean to fight in that theater. In the event of a natural disaster, that airport will prove to be a godsend.

There are two other airports in Curry County. One is the Gold Beach Municipal airport, which is at risk from even a distant tsunami; let alone the "big one" that WILL hit us, possibly sooner rather than later. That airport will be absolutely of no use whatsoever in the event of a local earthquake and tsunami, being only 20 feet above sea level. This airport is operated by the Port of Gold Beach, and has basic aircraft services available. The second airport will also be of limited value in a disaster scenario. The Brookings airport is quite small, only 2900 foot runway, is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, and will prove problematic for any large scale activity. That airport is not suitable for larger, heavier aircraft, nor are the approaches acceptable for that use. Runway load capacity won't support heavy aircraft. This airport is operated by Curry County and has NO basic aircraft services or fuel available. It is fine as a general aviation airport, which is its present function.

Curry County, at present, is unable to provide the services it is required to provide. They have not enhanced the Brookings airport that they DO operate to any major extent. There is no fuel, nor are there any basic aircraft services there, except for tie downs, and some limited hangar leases to private parties. They have no business taking on another project when their funding is so nebulous that the county has threatened to dissolve into neighboring counties and thereby cease to exist as a county. Either that, or the County leadership has some other ideas, which have not been made public, to convert the Cape Blanco airport to some other use, or compromise its airfield use in some fashion for some other type of project.

The State of Oregon, through its Department of Aviation, has the responsibility to maintain that airport as an airport and to enhance its use when possible as an airport. I am vitally concerned about keeping that facility as an airport that can be used in good times AND bad. We know that an airport, once lost, is gone forever. I have no trust that the County wishes to keep this functioning as an airport, despite assurances to the contrary. Please keep the airport in State hands, and under exclusive State control.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and information.

Sincerely,

Michael Murphy KB7DNN@gmail.com
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