

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2009

The Honorable Donald C. Winter
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Winter:

We are writing to request an extension to the February 18, 2009 public comment deadline set for the draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Overseas Environmental impact statement (EIS/OEIS) for the U.S. Navy's expanded use of the Northwest Training Range Complex off the Oregon coast.

The EIS/OEIS was released on December 29, 2008 with an electronic copy available on the Northwest Training Range Complex website. However, many citizens who live in potentially affected areas along the Oregon coast have expressed concern and frustration at the lack of public notice and the limited time to provide official comments to the U.S. Navy. The EIS/OEIS is 1,068 pages of dense technical language and yet most Oregon coast residents were not aware of the proposal's existence until a January 30, 2009 public meeting in Newport, Oregon. In addition, coastal residents have raised questions and serious concerns about the impact of the Navy's plans on coastal fisheries, tourism, ongoing efforts to develop alternative energy sources, and marine mammal research.

We believe that successful and innovative projects in Oregon require an open, fair communication process between private businesses, government, and citizens. In light of the complex issues at stake and unanswered questions regarding the potential impact of the Navy's plans, we ask that you both extend the public comment period to April 11, 2009 and hold at least two additional public meetings in Oregon, including one in Tillamook County, to ensure that those who may be affected and wish to comment on the project may do so.

We appreciate your immediate attention on this matter. If you have any additional questions, please contact Alison Craig in Congressman Schrader's Oregon office at (503) 588-9100.

Sincerely,


RON WYDEN
United States Senator


JEFF MERKLEY
United States Senator


KURT SCHRADER
Member of Congress


EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress


PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress


DAVID WU
Member of Congress