Dear US Coast Guard,

My name is William H. McCance, and I operate a sailing vessel Empress, a 45 foot sloop, in the waters around Fishers Island, New York.

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed removal of navigational aids around Fishers Island, Southeastern Connecticut and Rhode Island. These aids are essential for the safe navigation of our complex and sometimes challenging waters.

The navigational buoys along the Fishers Island Sound play a critical role in ensuring safe passage for vessels of all types, especially in conditions of limited visibility or challenging currents. Removing these aids would significantly increase the risk of accidents and jeopardize the safety of both recreational and commercial mariners.

I have sailed for 61 years. I have served as Commodore of the Fishers Island Yacht Club. I have chaired the Fishers Island Sailing Program. The ocean is a dangerous place. Each time I cast off my lines, whether to go for an afternoon sail or an extended passage, I always review charts and navigational buoys with safety in mind. Relying completely on electronic navigational tools is foolish and dangerous. This is what I was taught when Loran was the standard tool. This is what I teach now that GPS is the standard tool.

While the removal of these aids to navigation might save money, they most certainly cost lives. Lives of boaters and the lives of the brave men and women of the Coast Guard that come to their rescue.

I respectfully urge the Coast Guard to reconsider the removal of these important navigational aids and to fully weigh the broader safety implications of such changes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

William H. McCance

Fishers Island, NY

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