



CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT MAINE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES, CHAIR
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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEES:
BIOTECHNOLOGY, HORTICULTURE, AND RESEARCH
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

October 5, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to oppose the proposed disestablishment of the Drunkard Ledge Daybeacon (LLNR 4100) and the Fiddler Ledge Daybeacon (LLNR 3985) as advertised in the Coast Guard First District Local Notice to Mariners, published on February 1, 2023. Located at the western end of the Fox Islands Thorofare in Penobscot Bay, the daybeacons play a vital role in helping the North Haven ferry, and hundreds of working and pleasure boats safely navigate every day.

The Local Notice to Mariners states that the daybeacons have no navigational significance and do not mark navigable channels. However, the daybeacons and their radar reflectors are routinely used as a visual signal, and for radar location, to help boats navigate Penobscot Bay while avoiding the dangerous ledges below, which are especially difficult to locate during high tide. These daybeacons are a vital navigational tool for the North Haven Ferry, which safely transported approximately 55,000 passengers and over 20,000 vehicles in 2021.¹ The North Haven Ferry often tacks into the wind and travels up the bay for a smoother ride when there is a strong northeast wind for safety and passenger comfort rather than going directly across the bay. When navigating in that area, it is important to know exactly where the Drunkard Ledge is located to avoid grounding or hitting the rocks below as it provides the safe turning point towards Fox Islands Thorofare.

The Local Notice to Mariners also states that both daybeacons are well marked on electronic and paper charts. However, existing navigational aids provide conflicting and erroneous information on the status of the daybeacons, particularly for the Drunkard. Even though the Drunkard Ledge itself still appears on paper and electronic charts, it is also shown as having a daybeacon; it has none. At high tide, Drunkard Ledge is completely underwater for several hours and therefore invisible to the eye and radar, though still dangerous. The lack of that daybeacon and conflicting navigational information makes it more difficult for boaters to safely navigate in an area with a long history of groundings and hits.

As a resident of North Haven, I have spoken with many constituents who share my concern about the disestablishment of these daybeacons. I urge you to protect the safety of boaters in Penobscot Bay and rebuild the Drunkard Ledge and Fiddler Ledge Daybeacons with high-quality, durable materials. Thank you for your consideration of these requests, please reach out to

¹ <https://www.islandinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/II-MSFS-Summary-of-Existing-Transportation-System.pdf>

Christina Rankin in my office at Christina.Rankin@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-6116 with any questions or additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chellie Pingree". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chellie" and the last name "Pingree" clearly distinguishable.

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress