Collector's Office
District of Portland and Falmouth
Portland 15th March 1831.

Sir:

Last evening I received your letter of the 8th of March instant relative to building several Light Houses and placing Spindles and Buoys in Penobscot River. In order to judge of the necessary height of the towers to be erected at White Head and Franklin Island, I have this day directed Captain Joseph Sturdevant, commanding the Revenue Boat Yeager, to repair to Franklin Island and White Head, as soon as may be, to examine and report to me the height it will be necessary to erect each of those towers, (as the land may be higher or lower,) to have them as high as the present tower. As soon as I get his report, I will advertise for proposals to build them, which I cannot do with propriety until I know how high the towers must be.

I will as soon as possible examine the other situations and purchase the land, and report to you. . . . . But allow me to suggest to you whether it will not be best to contract this season for their erection the next season. The truth is that the Stone Masons generally get their Seasons' work engaged early in the year, and if it is possible to get them done this Season, they will not be done until very late, and done in a hurried manner, and be destroyed by the frost.

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Those to be built at Cape Porpoise, Fox Island Thorough-Fare and Marshall's Point, are not very important, when done. White head should be rebuilt this year. If Franklin Island can be made to stand until next year, it would be best, as it is important that it should be substantially built, as it is an important light, as well as that at White head. — Since Poon Island Light House was repaired last year and furnished with a new lantern, it answers an excellent purpose, and it is very doubtful whether its height can be increased without taking it entirely down, and it will take a long time to obtain the necessary information relating to the whole and purchase the land so as to be able to advertise for proposals understandingly. I can have no doubt, therefore, (if it meets your approbation,) but what it will be best to provide this year for building the next year, all except White head, unless it shall turn out that the one at Franklin Island will not do to rely on until another year. As to the materials at White Head and Franklin Island, as they are of wood, I do not think there are any of the materials at either place which will answer any purpose for the new buildings, except what relates to the Bell at White head. If the lanterns are not too much rusted and corroded, it is possible they may do for some of the unimportant Light Houses to be built, and the old lights may continue at White head and Franklin Islands until the new ones are in operation. I shall, however, proceed as fast as possible to prepare to advertise for each of the whole, as soon as I get

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your instructions; but I can get your answer to this before I can be prepared to advertise for any except White Head and Franklin Island; and if you should consent to have the latter put off until next Season, a short advertisement to that effect will stop the proposals for buildings until a new advertisement is published. I am satisfied that the public good required the course to be pursued that I have suggested but shall be governed by your decision.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Very respectfully,

Your humble servant

John Chandler, Collector, and
Superintendent of Light Houses in Maine.

Stephen Pleasonton, Esquire,
Fifth Auditor and Acting
Commissioner of the Revenue,
Washington City.