Washington June 17th 1840

Sir

Agreable to the request in your Letter of the 27th May I left Cape Henlopen and proceeded to Thomas' point Light house. I found its situation as represented by the superintendent. the bank which is high has washed away within 10 or 12 feet of the Light house and remains nearly perpendicular. in one of those Extraordinary Gales which we are liable to in the Latter part of August & September the Light house would be in great danger of being undermined — the point as far as the United States Land Extends forms a triangle the two sides Exposed to the action of the sea measure 600 feet Each in Length. I should recomend removeing the Light House back in a West south West direction one hundred & sixty or not Exceeding one hundred & seventy feet. any farther back. will injure its Utility to Navigation. this Location will place it in the center between the two sides 660 feet distance from either bank. a small distance back of the dwelling house. the tower will be required to be built up three feet higher then it now is to carry the Lantern above the Chimney of the dwelling house. the tower is built of rough split stone of rather small size. the stairs are hammer'd stone. four New additional stone stairs will be required in raising the tower three feet —

I will take the Light house down remove the materials to the seite recomended. & build it in a Faithfull manner the diameter & thickness of the walls the same as they now are. height to be three feet higher. four new stone steps to be added to the Circular Stairs. any part of the Lantern

or Tower that may be injured in taking down
or by decay so as not to be fitt to put up again to be
replaced with New. to be completed on or before the First
Day of September Next. for the sum of two thousand Dollars

The Lamps in this Light house are in good order having
been recently repaired by Capt Howland. but the Reflectors
have proved to be useless. they were made in Baltimore
many years since not correct in Form. Verey thin. are worn
with Large Bruises in all of them. with no more Lustre
than an old tin Wash bowl— there are 13 Lamps. two of
them I should recomend to be discontinued as they reflect
directly over the Land and are of no possible Use —
any time previous to the Gale in December Last. this bank might
have been secured with piles Timber & plank so as to have prevented
the Necessity of removeing the Light house but has now approached
to near to allow the bank an angle of 21½ degrees —
it appears that a Large Amount has been Expended in Stone
Laid on the beach on both sides of the point. how any
person could form such erroneous idea as that of putting stone
Loosely on a beach. to prevent or to secure a high bank. again
the Effects of the sea. is to me astonishing. — — — — — —

From the information obtained from the Collector at Baltimore
as well as from a Mr Lyon attached to the Custom house who
had been often & recently at Little Watts Island Light house
I found that the island was Low Land with shallow water round it.
no high bank to secure. but a Low beach. that their object
had been to secure this beach by covering it with stone
that as far as they had gone it appeared to have the Effect
contemplated. but there was a small part of the beach on
which no stone had been Laid. on which the Gale in December
Last had made some inroads. it was for this object that they
asked for a small additional Quantity of Stone. there can be no
Doubt that the money which has been paid for stone had been

Expended in a well constructed Breakwater of piles timber & Plank that security would have been given to the island for a series of years, providing no means of getting to Wath's Island but Knowing a Vessel on purpose at Considerable Expence & that so much had been Expended in stone which with a small Addition would preserve the island at least for a few years I thought it Adviseable not to proceed there.

I should recommend from Long observations in no instance to make use of stone alone for security against the inroads of the sea on sand. Except where you go to the Expence of a permanent sea wall properly constructed & of suitable materials well Laid—

I have the honor to be Sir
Very Respectfully
your Ob. Ser.
Winslow Lewis

Stephen Pleasonton Esq
1st Auditor and Acting
Commissioner of the Revenue

(Wrote to Wm Flick
June 19. 1840 enclosing
a copy of the above)