THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON

July 3, 1952

My dear Miss Barlow:

Your letter of May 20, 1952, addressed to the President and pertaining to Stamford Harbor Lighthouse has been referred to this office for consideration because the operation and maintenance of this government facility as an aid to navigation comes under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Coast Guard, an agency of the Department of the Treasury.

It is noted that you state that the residents of Connecticut are disturbed by the report that Stamford Harbor Lighthouse is to be razed and you ask that it be preserved as a landmark of traditional interest and that the twenty-four hour potential rescue facilities which are assumed to be available through personnel assigned to operate and maintain this aid to navigation be retained.

The sentimental regard for Stamford Harbor Lighthouse by native sons and daughters in the area is readily understood. However, at the same time one cannot overlook the fact that the Coast Guard is not authorized by law to preserve an aid to navigation for its local or historic interest value. This particular case is no exception nor is it without precedent, as many lighthouses have been disestablished and abandoned in the past for the same reasons that Stamford Harbor lighthouse is being abandoned.

Where interest in the preservation of an abandoned aid to navigation is sincere, arrangements have been made whereby title to the structure was transferred to a state, political subdivision thereof, or to a civic group to thereafter maintain the transferred property as a landmark of local historic interest. This method of disposal of Stamford Harbor Lighthouse will be carefully explored prior to action being taken to raze the structure.

Without lessening the importance of various rescue incidents in which Stamford Lighthouse personnel may have played a part, too much credence should not be placed on their location in this respect from the point of view of hearing and seeing long distances. The man on watch and tending to the operation of the light and fog signal of this station is frequently distracted from happenings occurring on the outside due to station machinery noises and the confining nature of his duties. Thus it can be seen that twenty-four hour duty at a light station is not a patrol of vigilance as is associated with the operation of a lifeboat station or other rescue activities where personnel are specifically provided for that purpose.

The diesel engines installed in 1951 at Stamford Harbor Lighthouse were not new equipment. They had seen eleven years previous service at Romer Shoal Light Station and were installed at Stamford Harbor Lighthouse to replace the old worn-out gasoline engines for which replacement parts were no longer obtainable. All usable equipment at Stamford Harbor Lighthouse will be retained for use elsewhere after that station is disestablished.

The discontinuance of Stamford Harbor Lighthouse as an aid to navigation, and the improvement of Stamford Harbor West Breakwater light and fog signal for operation by cable control from shore, is the result of careful study and deliberation of a

Coast Guard Board constituted by direction of the President. The project was given approval by Congress through an appropriation of funds provided to do the work. The method of operation of the improved breakwater installation has been time-proven as successful and fully reliable as evidenced by many similar installations in the United States.

There is every reasonable assurance that in carrying out the present plan of improvement in aids, maritime hazards at the entrance to Stamford Harbor will not be increased. Every effort will be made to afford local interests an opportunity to acquire the lighthouse tower in order that they may preserve it for its traditional historic value.

Very truly yours,

(signed) G. H. Foley

Under Secretary of the Treasury

Miss Catherine Frewen Barlow
4 Shore Acres Drive
Old Greenwich, Conn.