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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

November 8, 1959

Chief Bosn Norman Jelck
Group Commander
U.S.Coast Guard
South Portland, Me.

Dear Sir:

I have waited till the end of the season before I wrote you to protest the fog signal on Perkins Island Light in the Kennebec River, and the prospect of the same thing happening to the Pond I. Light in the mouth of the Kennebec. I live all summer every summer on Long I. between these lights; and, depending on the wind, I hear each or both of the fog signals. I have delayed writing in order to be able to make a reasonable trial of the situation and arrive at a sober conclusion. I thought it might be true, as Clarence Skolfield of the Squirrel Point Light said in July, "You'd be surprised how you get used to it."

But my wife and I and our family haven't. Our neighbors haven't. And from what we heard of the residents of Parker's Head and Marr Town, the captive audience in those villages haven't and are pretty sore about the high-pitched, constant, 24-hour wailing of the Perkins I. signal. Perhaps you have already heard from those unwilling victims.

I realize that it is inevitable that more and more Lights along the Atlantic Coast are being converted into automatic lights. But to be unnecessarily dinned at <u>all</u> the time by a screaming horn is not only annoying and frustrating; it is unhealthy. It goes directly against the laws of public health. And it goes against one of the fundamental purposes of your fine organization: to <u>aid</u> those who use the Kennebec River.

If Pond I. is similarly made into a public nuisance, it will be unbearable. It will depress real estate values in the neighborhood and destroy good will toward the U.S.Coast Guard.

A city cop would arrest any one who let an auto horn go on without intermission for hours and days and months. The neighbors would murder the owner. The horn would be smashed. The newspapers would start an anti-noise campaign, ably supported by psychiatrists and other M.D.'s.

Surely electronic devices are available to the Coast Guard which would make possible the accurate control of the fog signals of all the lights under the jurisdiction of the Kennebec River Life Boat Station. The bell on Fort Popham is now and has been for years turned on and off by the boys at the Kennebec R.L.B.Station. Surely, Perkins I. and Pond I. could be controlled similarly either by wire or by radio beam from Popham.

I think too much of the U.S.Coast Guard and its splendid work to sit unprotestingly by and hear daily complaints and sneers. I think too much of my own very good ears not to protest against this constant noise, day and night, fair weather and foul. This noise is an invasion of privacy and a violation of an American citizen's right to be let alone, when there is no situation of common danger.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Maine's Senator Margaret Chase Smith.

I urge you to take measures to stop the Perkins I. fair weather noise.

I urge you to prevent Pond I. from joining the incessant caterwauling.

Very truly yours,

Willard H. Bonner

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