State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

March 19, 2001

Mr. John Shannahan, Director
Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Mr. Shannahan:

We write to you seeking your assistance in having the Avery Point Lighthouse in Groton listed on the state Register of Historic Places. We are working in cooperation with the Avery Point Lighthouse Society (APLS), a group of local volunteer citizens who are dedicated to saving and restoring this historic landmark.

The Avery Point Lighthouse is located on the University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus in Groton. The 72-acre campus, once the estate of wealthy industrialist Morton B. Plant, was purchased by the State of Connecticut in 1938. The State Quit Claimed the deed to the federal government in 1942. The site became the home of the United States Coast Guard Training Station from 1942 through 1967. UConn has occupied the site since 1967.

The lighthouse was built by the Coast Guard in 1943. It was the last lighthouse built in Connecticut and is believed to have been built as a memorial to all lighthouse keepers. The light was first lit in May of 1944 and extinguished in September 1967, when th Coast Guard moved their facilities to New York.

Unfortunately, over the past twenty years. maintenance and upkeep of the lighthouse has been sorely lacking and largely discontinued. The structure now has some serious deterioration problems.

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UConn has applied to the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicle's Long Island Sound License Plate Fund for grant monies to initiate restoration of the structure on at least three occasions, however, all requests were rejected.

In July of 2000, APLS became actively involved in the effort to restore the lighthouse. The group is working closely with representatives of UConn-Avery Point and staff members of the American Lighthouse Foundation in Wells, Maine. APLS has been successful in raising awareness, support and money for the restoration effort. Some of their accomplishments include:

- Obtaining close to 9,000 signatures on petitions requesting governmental funding for the restoration
- Receiving donations of $3,000 each from the governments of the Town and City of Groton
- Raising in excess of $15,000 through various fundraising activities, membership drives and sales of lighthouse merchandise
- Acquiring the pro bono services of a reputable engineering firm to conduct a structural study of the lighthouse

Costs of the stabilization, restoration and relighting of the structure could reach close to $300,000. APLS will continue its fundraising activities until the project is complete and the lighthouse becomes part of the overall public access program of the historical and educational resources of Long Island Sound.

Designating the lighthouse as part of the Connecticut Register of Historic Places would significantly enhance APLS's ability to solicit and secure the funding necessary to restore and preserve the lighthouse as an historic memorial to the State of Connecticut's proud maritime tradition.

We have enclosed background information on the history of the lighthouse as well as information on APLS's fundraising activities and cost estimates on the restoration and repair.

The contact person for APLS is Mr. James Streeter at The Avery Point Lighthouse Society, P.O. Box 1552, Groton, Connecticut 06340.

Thank you for your consideration of this request in providing us and APLS with information on the process necessary for the Avery Point Lighthouse to be listed in the Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Representative Lenny Winkler

Senator Melodie Peters

Senator Catherine Cook

Representative Nancy DeMarinis

Representative Wade Hyslop

Representative Jack Malone

Representative Mary McGrattan

Representative Steve Mikutel

Representative Peter Nystrom

Representative Linda Orange

Representative Gary Orefice

Senator Edith Prague

Representative Kevin Ryan

Representative James Spallone

Representative Andrea Stillman

Representative Diana Urban

Enclosure