

I represent Whitehead Light Station, the lighthouse at the mouth of Penobscot Bay that was commissioned by president Thomas Jefferson in 1803. The preservation of our nation's invaluable historic lighthouses is dear to our non profit which has had stewardship of Whitehead since the 1990's and offers unique adult enrichment retreats at our light station. The recent storm damage in January wiped out the boathouse built 150 years ago as well as the dock cutting off access to the island that is home to Whitehead. The same dock was partially destroyed in a storm just 13 months earlier and rebuilt "stronger" less than a year ago.

Recent storms have highlighted the vulnerability of these structures in general, which play a crucial role in maritime safety and contribute significantly to our cultural heritage.

Historic lighthouses are not only iconic landmarks but also serve as navigational aids, that have guiding ships safely through treacherous waters for hundreds of years. The storm in January has underscored the urgent need for strategic investments to make these structures resilient to extreme weather conditions, ensuring their continued functionality and preservation. In the case of Whitehead if we could build a granite pier rather than wood or metal dock it is believed that would not only be able to withstand future storms but also protect a boathouse if we are able to rebuild one.

By allocating funds to enhance the resilience of historic lighthouses, the state would be safeguarding maritime safety, protecting our cultural heritage, and promoting tourism. The economic and social benefits of such an investment extend beyond the immediate preservation efforts, creating opportunities for local communities and fostering a sense of pride and identity.

Furthermore, with the increasing frequency and intensity of storms due to climate change, fortifying these structures is a proactive step toward securing our coastal regions and supporting the maritime industry.

I hope you consider this proposal earnestly, recognizing the long-term impact it can have on both the safety of our waters and the preservation of our history. Investing in the resilience of historic lighthouses is an investment in our state's safety, heritage, and economic prosperity.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Gigi Lirot

Whitehead Light Station