



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

79 ELM STREET HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

PHONE: (860) 424-3001

Arthur J. Rocque, Jr.
Commissioner



April 26, 2000

Representative Lenny T. Winkler
151 Pamela Avenue
Groton, CT 06340

Re: Avery Point Lighthouse Application

Dear Representative *Lenny* Winkler:

Thank you for your letter of April 3, 2000 concerning the University of Connecticut's application to the Long Island Sound License Plate program for funds to restore the Avery Point Lighthouse. Please note that the Connecticut lighthouse preservation account, which is intended to support the maintenance and restoration of lighthouse structures and associated properties, did not receive any legislative appropriations and has not obtained any private donations to date. Accordingly, there is at present no money and no grant program for lighthouse preservation. Be assured, however, that this application will receive full consideration under the criteria of the License Plate program under the account established by C.G.S. §22a-27k. I have enclosed a copy of this year's Request For Proposals for your information.

As you may know, the Long Island Sound License Plate grants are very competitive, and fewer than half of the applicants are selected for funding. Previous applications to rehabilitate the Avery Point lighthouse did not receive funding under the public access category because the proposed engineering studies and structural stabilization would not provide the level of additional or enhanced public access to Long Island Sound as did the projects which were funded. For example, nearby projects that have been funded in recent years include a public access deck overlooking Long Island Sound and the mouth of the Thames River at the Avery Point Campus, with signs describing the estuary's natural resources and significant sights (1997); public access improvements at two sites along the Poquonnock River in Groton, including the construction of a recreation area with pathway and benches as well as off-site parking (1998); and construction of a 400 linear foot handicapped accessible pedestrian nature walk, extended boardwalk and platform, new landscaping, benches and interpretive signage at Ocean Beach Park along Alewife Cove in New London (1998).

Nonetheless, I agree that the restoration of the Avery Point lighthouse is a worthy cause, and I appreciate the efforts of its supporters to obtain appropriate community-based funding. To this end, License Plate Program Coordinator Kate Hughes of the Department's Office of Long Island Sound Programs has met on-site with Tom Duguay of UConn Avery Point and has had several discussions with him regarding funding eligibility and potential future grant opportunities. I understand that a future phase of the lighthouse restoration, once the structure can actually be opened for public use, offers a more promising opportunity for a License Plate Grant. In any event, my staff will continue to be available to provide guidance and support to these efforts.

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If you have any questions concerning the Long Island Sound account or the grant process, please contact Kate Hughes at (860) 424-3034. Thank you for your interest in and support of the Long Island Sound License Plate program.

Sincerely


Arthur J. Rocque, Jr.
Commissioner

AJR/db

Enc.

cc: Kate Hughes
James L. Streeter, APLS
Thomas Duguay, UConn Avery Point