

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2025

Admiral Kevin Lunday, Acting Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Lunday:

We write to express our concern regarding the Coast Guard's ongoing effort to modernize and "rightsize" the aids to navigation (ATON) system across the First District in accordance with your press release dated 2 May, 2025. While we understand and appreciate the Coast Guard's intent to align the ATON system with the needs of modern vessels and technologies, the potential removal or modification of approximately 2,700 buoys — many of which are in Rhode Island waters — may have serious impacts on the safety of local mariners and maritime stakeholders.

Rhode Island's coastal and offshore waters are complex, frequently crowded, and often hazardous. Many mariners, particularly those operating small commercial and recreational vessels, depend on traditional visual aids to safely transit these areas. While electronic navigation tools such as GPS, AIS, and electronic charts have expanded mariner capability, they are not universally available or relied upon, especially in the smaller vessel community. Even mariners operating larger vessels continue to depend on buoys for visual reference and situational awareness, particularly in poor weather, high-traffic areas, and inlets

We are particularly concerned that the scale and scope of this effort may outpace the ability of working mariners to meaningfully participate in the process. Many are unaware of the full list of potential changes, and others simply do not have the bandwidth to analyze hundreds of proposed removals while actively working at sea. These mariners—who are often self-employed or operate on tight margins—deserve to have their knowledge and experience meaningfully considered in any decision that could impact their safety.

To that end, we request that the Coast Guard directly seek out and consider input from maritime stakeholders in Rhode Island, including state agencies; local police, fire, and emergency management agencies; harbor masters; commercial and recreational fishermen's associations; ferry operators; marinas; and recreational boaters.

While we recognize the Coast Guard's desire to promote efficiency in the deployment of ATONs, that effort cannot compromise safety and it requires a transparent and collaborative process that includes stakeholders who know these waterways best.

Thank you for your continued leadership and your attention to these concerns. We look forward to your prompt response and to working together to ensure a safe and resilient navigation system for all who depend on Rhode Island's waters.

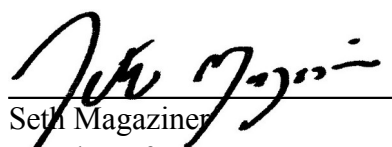
Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress