



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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April 8, 2020

Matthew W. Sibley, Rear Admiral  
U.S. Coast Guard  
Assistant Commandant for Capability

Re: **OPPOSE** - USCG-2020-0042

Admiral Sibley,

On behalf of the City of Cambridge Mayor and Commissioners, I am submitting a letter in **opposition** to USCG-2020-0042 as it pertains to consolidating U.S. Coast Guard Station Oxford. I appreciate the opportunity to submit comment on USCG-2020-0042 and hope that you recognize the impact that USCG-2020-0042 would have on the City of Cambridge ("Cambridge") and neighboring jurisdictions.

We were surprised to learn of USCG-2020-0042 proposing to consolidate Station Oxford. Cambridge, as well as many waterfront communities, relies on Station Oxford for the safety of boaters on its waters. Cambridge is on the southern bank of the Choptank River. There are numerous water dependent marine and recreational boating businesses within the City, including harbor or maritime facilities, marinas, boatyards, waterman operations, fishing charters, yacht charters, paddle boarding, tour boat operators, aquaculture operations, waterfront restaurants, and accommodations. Station Oxford is vital in the operation of the water dependent activities and businesses.

Station Oxford provides timely response to any emergency on the water. If Station Oxford is closed, the next closest station to most of the areas Station Oxford serves is Station Annapolis. This is a major concern. Station Annapolis is 32 nautical miles from Oxford, 25 nautical miles from St. Michaels, 45 nautical miles from Solomons, 80 nautical miles from Crisfield, and 48 nautical miles from Cambridge. In addition to the distance, Station Annapolis requires the responding crew to travel across the entire Chesapeake Bay, which can be treacherous at times and require slower boat speeds, resulting in an increased response time.

A distance of 48 nautical miles, even on a day with great boating weather, is alarming. Without the presence of Station Oxford to board boats to provide safety education and regulation checks, and public awareness that the closest Coast Guard is a fair distance away, we feel that boater noncompliance will rise causing more accidents and emergencies and be an overall detriment to the public health and safety.

Station Oxford contributes much more than emergency response to our community. The largest role that Station Oxford plays is in educating boater safety. We strongly feel that without the education aspect that Station Oxford offers, the risk to our marine community will greatly increase. Without Station Oxford, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Police and local fire department cannot feasibly provide the same level of boater safety education and emergency response due to limited staffing and duty hours. To consolidate Station Oxford to Station Annapolis would result in many missed opportunities for boater safety education, resulting in an increase of boating accidents.

In addition to the general safety Station Oxford provides, it is a pivotal contributor to the two ironman triathlons each year in Cambridge. During both ironman triathlons, Station Oxford monitors the boat traffic and competitor swimming course and provides backup emergency response. Cambridge and the individuals that run the triathlons depend on the participation of Station Oxford each year. Station Oxford also contributes to the Thunder on Choptank event in Cambridge by setting up a no-wake zone and reminding boaters to slow down. These events would not run as safely and as smoothly without the participation of the Station Oxford crew and we are concerned that the closure of Station Oxford will negatively impact these events which are great boosts for our economy.

We believe Station Oxford is necessary for the protection of the health and safety of boaters in the area it serves. A replacement of Station Oxford by Station Annapolis will not adequately protect our boaters and I am concerned it will result in an increase of accidents with more detrimental results due to the prolonged response time. Station Oxford is necessary to provide security of the public health and safety and emergency assistance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

  
Mayor Victoria Jackson-Stanley