



HISP

Spring 2013

“Still Our Lamps Must Brightly Burn”: An Examination of the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000

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The National Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000 was enacted in order to transition federally owned, historic lighthouses to qualified government bodies, non-profits, or private citizens. Changing technologies over the course of the twentieth century created a diminished need for traditionally manned lighthouses, therefore Federal ownership was no longer necessary. Amdendments to the National Historic Preservation Act added in 1980, required that Federal Agencies protect

and care for their National Register listed or eligible properties. For the United States Coast Guard this meant having to expend funds for historic lighthouses which were no longer necessary for their mission. Although there were previous mechanisms in place to transition lighthouses out of the United States Coast Guard's responsibility, they were not inclusive enough of small, non-profit groups that very often were instrumental in the preservation of the lighthouse properties.

By allowing a way for local preservation groups to assume ownership of lighthouses that are often significant to the local community, not just for the associated historical value, but also community pride, tourism value, and economic development, this program is promoting what should be a goal of preservation as a whole: the inclusion of local people, and a consideration of their values. When people are able to take ownership over and care for historic structures that are

important to them, it contirbutes to ongoing preservation efforts, and will hopefully inspire younger generations within the community to contribute to the preservation of these lighthouses when they get older.