

16700
23 November 1999

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CG MSO Milwaukee ltr 16700 of 22 November 1999

From: Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, Milwaukee, WI
To: Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District (m)

Subj: DISAPPEARANCE OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL LINDA E (O.N.
236906), WITH THREE CREWMEMBERS NEAR PORT WASHINGTON, WI ON
LAKE MICHIGAN ON DECEMBER 11, 1998

Ref: (a) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations(CFR) 28.60

1. This investigation report is forwarded, approved, subject to the following comments.
2. Recommendation (a) is based on the belief that a float free mounted EPIRB could have added to the efficiency with which the Coast Guard and other state and local response agencies searched for the LINDA E. I concur with this recommendation based on the extensive area and resource search mounted by Group Milwaukee. In evaluating exemptions permitted by reference (a), it may be important to consider the following. Had this disappearance occurred one month later, there would have been considerably fewer vessels available to respond to an emergency near the Wisconsin shore of Lake Michigan. Coast Guard Stations remove their boats from the water before ice sets in about late December. Commercial traffic density decreases as due to the closure of locks. This investigation revealed the tendency of commercial fishermen to sail throughout the winter and during harsh ice and weather conditions. Locating survivors during winter is especially time-critical.
3. Recommendation (b) to publish this report has been partially accomplished as MSO Milwaukee issued a safety advisory to all commercial fishermen on February 10, 1999. The individually addressed letters cited various fishing industry safety recommendations based on the findings of the Coast Guard's National Fishing Vessel Casualty Task Force. Although I intend to publish this report on the MSO Milwaukee web site, specific stability details in the report will be simplified so that they may be more easily understood and applied.
4. This report and a description of all available evidence gathered will be provided to State law enforcement agencies for their use. MSO Milwaukee will work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Ozaukee County Sheriff Department to save evidence collected during this investigation.
5. MSO Milwaukee has provided information to private diving and salvage companies interested in conducting underwater searches for the LINDA E. Thus far, hundreds of hours

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of searching near the gill nets, along likely return routes taken by the LINDA E and along the trackline of the ITB Michigan/ Barge Great Lakes have failed to find its location. As of the date of this report, private underwater search efforts continue.

6. I concur this case should be closed. Should the Coast Guard obtain additional information pertinent to a determination as to the cause of the casualty then the investigation report may warrant reopening.

D. L. LERSCH