

Rep. Hughes offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 227.

A resolution to memorialize Congress to reject the President's budget proposal to eliminate the search-and-rescue U.S. Coast Guard helicopter unit in Muskegon County and to restructure the Traverse City Air Station.

Whereas, Lake Michigan is the second largest of the Great Lakes; it is 307 miles in length and 118 miles in width. Over 950,000 recreational vessels are registered in Michigan and an estimated 182,000 recreational boaters, from multiple states, operate on Lake Michigan sometime during the year. In addition, the 410-foot S.S. Badger and Lake Express car ferries each make multiple trips across the lake between May and September, transporting hundreds of passengers each voyage; and

Whereas, The U.S. Coast Guard Air Facility in Muskegon County, at Lake Michigan, provides important mid-lake accessibility to respond to water emergencies. The next closest stations able to respond to West Michigan are Chicago, 115 miles south, or Traverse City, 113 miles north. Closing the Muskegon County air facility would significantly decrease the Coast Guard's search-and-rescue capabilities, leaving boaters on Lake Michigan at far greater risk in the event of an emergency; and

Whereas, The proposed reduction in the number of helicopters in the Traverse City air station would further limit the Coast Guard's search-and rescue capabilities. Reducing or eliminating any current Coast Guard emergency response facilities on Lake Michigan will compromise its capacity to respond quickly to an emergency in the mid-lake area of Lake Michigan; and

Whereas, The Muskegon County Coast Guard helicopter unit and the Traverse City air station also respond to homeland security situations. Located just 250 miles from Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, the helicopter units provide additional support necessary to protect national borders; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize Congress to reject the President's budget proposal to eliminate the search-and-rescue U.S. Coast Guard helicopter unit in Muskegon County and to restructure the Traverse City Air Station; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.