

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR RELEASE: 6:30 A.M., JAN. 8, 1975

ISSUED: January 8, 1975

Forwarded to:

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries
Commission
400 Royal Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-74-43

On August 1, 1974, a tug boat pushing four barges (two abreast) struck the east span of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway in New Orleans, Louisiana, and 252 feet of the bridge collapsed into the water. Two motor vehicles plunged into the lake through the void created by the collapsed deck, and three persons were killed.

The National Transportation Safety Board is aware of a 1967 resolution of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana, which authorized and directed the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to require all barges, tug boats, and dredges operating on Lake Pontchartrain to comply with certain safety standards and conditions. The resolution requires that a second man be on watch at all times aboard tugs and tows operating in the lake.


The resolution, however, did not provide the Commission with authority and manpower to enforce those standards and conditions promulgated by the Commission in response to the resolution. The Safety Board has learned that, as a result, few, if any, safety inspections are conducted to assure compliance with the rules by operators of vessels navigating Lake Pontchartrain. Such compliance is imperative to guard against further collisions and their resultant loss of life.

The motoring public should be protected against the hazards created when errant marine vessels collide with the bridge and measures should be taken to prevent such accidents.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission:

Maintain a safety inspection program which will insure compliance with its "Minimal Safety Rules Applicable to Tugs and Tows Operating in Lake Pontchartrain," as adopted on July 20, 1968.
(Recommendation H-74-43)

REED, Chairman, McADAMS, THAYER, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendation.


by: John H. Reed
Chairman

(The Safety Board has also made recommendations to the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission to improve safety on the Causeway.)

THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE DATE SHOWN ABOVE.
NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE THAT DATE.