



Gabarus Lighthouse  
Credit: Library and Archives Canada



Tobermory Lighthouse  
Credit: Library and Archives Canada

You have heard about twinned cities, but what about twinning lighthouses? Gabarus on the eastern side of Cape Breton Island is Nova Scotia's only hexagonal (6-sided) lighthouse built in 1890 for \$650. Big Tub Lighthouse at Tobermory on Georgian Bay, Ontario is also hexagonal and was built in 1895 for \$675. Why the \$25 difference? Gabarus stands 9.7 metres tall while Big Tub measures 13 metres high. Both have fixed red lights and switched from oil to hydro around the same time in the early 1950s. These two lighthouses are also subject to the forces of nature: Gabarus was moved back from an eroding cliff in 2015 while Big Tub had part of its foundation washed away by a wild winter storm in 1987. Still active aids to navigation, Gabarus shines year round while Big Tub is a seasonal light. As for federal heritage, neither got Heritage Lighthouse Protect Act (HLP) designation in spite of having much support from local community groups. A business plan to support them financially is a HLP requirement but regrettably none to date have been proposed.



Tobermory Lighthouse June 2025  
Credit: NSLPS



Gabarus in recent times  
Credit: Lighthouse Friends