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Aviation Accident Investigator
Aviation Safety, Eastern Region

Date: April 1, 2025
Subject: ERA25LA135, Pilots statement
Contact: James Luna, Pilot

The Following statement was made by the pilot, James Luna on the NTSB Form 6120.1. It was extracted due to the statement exceeding the margins of the text box.

I travelled to Hidden Harbor storage facility, Blue Moon Ridge Smithville, TN. 37166, where I keep my plane. Got weather briefing from ForeFlight (winds variable at 4 kts, very calm on the lake). After getting the plane out of the building (approximately 2:30-3:00pm) I towed it to the parking area near the boat ramp, unfolded the wings and completed my preflight/ runup. Taxied down the ramp and entered the water, did 4 takeoffs and landings on the water. The weather looked great for the next several days, so decided to fly to nearby airport (Smithville Municipal Airport-0A5) and fuel up. Returned to the lake to land and get the plane back to the storage unit, winds were very calm, approach was very smooth, contacted water sudden stop, nosed down and the water impact broke the canopy glass and it flew open, water was about a foot in the cockpit. My first thought was wheels down landing, after quick self check, removed seatbelt, looked at gear toggle switch and as I recall both lights were on, can't remember if I toggled the switch? Then, turned off master switch, didn't see any smoke or flames, turned master switch on and bilge switch. Water was going down in the cockpit at first. Plane was still floating high, so tried to restart engine, thought I might taxi to ram or shore, but it wouldn't start. I started to retrieve things floating in cockpit, saw my phone, grabbed it and holding it in the air to dry out. At this time I saw a boat heading in my direction (local fishermen), he helped me onto his boat. I realized that I didn't have my wallet, got back on the plane, but could not find my wallet. The plane was still floating high in the water so we

tried, unsuccessfully, to tow it closer to shore. He had called 911, told me that the local rescue, paramedics, etc. would be there soon. When they arrived they wanted me to ride back with them to get checked out, which I did. An ambulance was there with several medics, they checked me out and I had a small scratch on my right hand and arm near the elbow and some bruises. They couldn't find anything else and they released me. I didn't feel any pain or soreness from seatbelt or anywhere else. I got into my vehicle and drove to our house at the top of the hill, met my friend and we got on pontoon and returned to the crash site. The Corp of Engineers and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency were there and had tied the plane near the shore. I gave statements to the crew there and back at the ramp, and over the next day I gave statements to FAA (and other agencies, to many to remember, as requested) over the phone and in person. In conclusion, my reasoning for cause of accident was a wheels down water landing.

Thanks Again for your concern, and for your help in resolving this as soon as possible. If you need anything else please feel free to contact me.

//signed

James L. Luna