



**Alison Sucy, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Government Affairs  
on Behalf of the Maine Tourism Association**

**In Support of**

***LD 1998, An Act to Transfer the Arch Hangar at the Former Loring Air Force Base to the Loring Air Museum***

January 16, 2024

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business:

My name is Alison Sucy and I am the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Government Affairs for the Maine Tourism Association. The Maine Tourism Association, a non-profit, is the state's largest tourism organization. MTA has been promoting Maine and supporting members in every type of tourism business such as lodging, restaurants, retail, campgrounds, guides, and museums, historical, and cultural attractions for over 100 years. I am testifying in support of LD 1998.

The Arch Hangar at the former Loring Air Force Base was the first structure built on the base in 1947. It is one of two in the world (the other is at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota--the Pride Hangar, which is still in use). The Loring Air Museum has plans to relocate the museum to the hangar and use the remaining space to house a B-52 bomber and a KC-135 tanker. Arrangements have already been made for an F-104 Starfighter to be on permanent loan to the museum should it obtain the hangar.

The hangar has been vacant and decaying for over 15 years, and is in desperate need of repair. It is our understanding that if the museum receives the hangar, the hangar would be eligible to be listed as a historic landmark. This will assist accessing funds to repair and restore this unique building and turn it into a tourist attraction. We ask that the state allow that to happen.

Aroostook County is an important part of Maine's tourism economy. Visitors snowmobile across the former air force base, attend the County's many festivals and events, and camp, hike, canoe, ATV, ski, golf, and participate in many other activities in the area. This additional and unique attraction will enhance the economy of the region, benefiting the area's hotels, restaurants, campgrounds, stores, and other local businesses.

We respectfully ask that you support this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony.

The Maine Tourism Association is the state's largest advocate for all tourism-related businesses. Incorporated in 1922, MTA members include lodging, restaurants, camps, campgrounds, retail, outdoor recreation, guides, tour operators, transportation, amusements, and cultural and historical attractions. MTA also operates on behalf of the state seven State Visitor Information Centers from Kittery to Calais, and annually produces the state's official travel planner, *Maine Invites You* (since 1933).

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