

Submitted by Sandra Moreau from the Poland Spring Preservation Society.

Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government on LD 80, An Act to Adopt the Seppala Siberian Sleddog as the Maine State Dog.

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Sandra Moreau. I reside in Poland Spring, Maine and today I represent the Board of Directors of the Poland Spring Preservation Society.

The Poland Spring Preservation Society's mission is to preserve the Maine State Building and All Souls Chapel. The Society is run by a volunteer board and staff, ensuring the protection and restoration of these unique structures. The Maine State Building was originally built in 1893 for the Chicago World's Fair, also known as the Colombian Exposition. The Fair was to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus. All 44 states, dozens of countries, and even companies sent buildings to the grounds to participate in the grand event. The Maine State Building, built entirely of Maine wood and stone, is one of only 5 buildings remaining from the original 200 buildings at the fair. At the conclusion of the event, it was purchased by the Ricker family, disassembled, and transported by rail to its present location in Poland Spring. Then it was painstakingly reassembled and used as a library, art gallery, and museum.

Several years back, Disney released a movie about Leonhard Seppala and his sled dog Togo. The movie emphasized the excellence of the Seppala Siberian

husky breed over other sled dog breeds. Over the years, I have learned about the connection of Togo to Maine, the Poland Spring Resort, and the Ricker Family. The museum houses artifacts from Togo and his time at the resort. In 2022, we commissioned a bronze statue of Togo, that attracts seniors, families, and children of all ages to learn about the famous team of sled dogs and their connection to Maine. The museum, with the help of the Town of Poland, Poland Spring Resort, and Poland Spring Water, built a story book trail so children can learn about Togo and enjoy the outdoors. The trail is an attraction that brings people to Maine.

The Poland Spring Preservation Society is excited to announce with the help of David Boyer, our Maine Legislator, our commitment to support the nomination of the Seppala Siberian Sleddog as the Maine State Dog. On December 5, 2024 our board unanimously voted to support this initiative as we all felt strongly that the Seppala Siberian Sleddog encompasses the symbolism of strength and perseverance, which is a true reflection of Maine.

Thank you for your time.