



**APPALACHIAN
MOUNTAIN CLUB**
SINCE 1876

**Testimony of Eliza Townsend
in support of LD 1019
An Act to Provide Funding for Fort McClary
March 25, 2025**

Good afternoon, Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the ACF Committee, I am Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club.

AMC is a people-oriented conservation nonprofit; our mission is the protection, understanding, and enjoyment of the outdoors. We have 6,200 members in Maine and manage 130,000 acres of forestland in Piscataquis County for multiple use, including sustainable forestry, backcountry recreation, and outdoor education. We pay property taxes on all of our land.

We support LD 1019, which appropriates \$60,000 in one-time funds for renovations and maintenance to restore and preserve the Fort McClary State Historic Site in Kittery Point. Fort McClary marks both U.S. military and commercial history. A fort was first constructed on the site in 1690 in response to the imposition of a customs duty by the colony of New Hampshire. My favorite fact about Fort McClary, however, is that Hannibal Hamlin served there as cook to his U.S. Coast Guard Unit during the summer of 1864. He was the Vice President of the United States at the time!

Along with memorializing the military use of this strategic location, Fort McClary State Historic Site offers close-to-home access to the outdoors. The site's dramatic view of the Piscataqua River, fortifications and buildings to explore, picnic tables and relatively low entry fees make it a wonderful destination for a family outing. In these harried times, such locations are invaluable.

Despite being managed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands and rounding out our public outdoor recreation offerings, the state's historic sites were ineligible to share in the \$50 million allocated by the 130th legislature from the American Rescue Plan Act for investment in Maine's state parks. Like the state parks, the historic sites have long suffered from a lack of investment.

It is time to correct that neglect. For that reason, we support not only LD 1019 to invest in Fort McClary, but also the two bills sponsored by Senator Grohoski to invest a total of \$18 million in Maine's 15 historic sites, from Fort McClary at Kittery Point, to Fort Kent, on the banks of the Allagash River—and of course, our local favorite site, Katahdin Ironworks.

We urge you to vote LD 1019 Ought to Pass.