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Senator, District 35

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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Augusta, Maine 04333

*Testimony of Senator Mark W. Lawrence introducing  
LD 1019, An Act to Provide Funding for Fort McClary  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
March 25, 2025*

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Mark Lawrence. I am the State Senator from District 35 in southern York County, proudly representing Eliot, Kittery, Ogunquit, South Berwick and York. I am here to present **LD 1019, An Act to Provide Funding for Fort McClary**.

For over 275 years, Fort McClary located in Kittery Point, has protected the approaches of the Piscataqua River, overlooking the southern entryway to Kittery and the Gulf of Maine. It stood ready to defend important territory during the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and World War I. The site reminds the thousands of annual visitors about Maine's wartime history and how military architecture and technology has advanced over time.

Home to an aging brick magazine, rifleman's house and the landmark 1844 hexagonal blockhouse, the remaining structures and land at Fort McClary served an important historical purpose through the five wars I mentioned previously. The Fort now serves another important purpose, teaching the next generation about that very history while serving as a first stop to thousands on their Maine vacations.

LD 1019 would provide \$60,000 for renovations and maintenance to restore and preserve the Fort McClary State Historic Site. Working in companionship with the Friends of Fort McClary, a group of dedicated volunteers who plan park activities and raise funds to support the park, this appropriation will go towards the renovations, maintenance needs and upkeep needed for the Fort to continue welcoming visitors from across the country and world.

The Maine Beaches Association reported that York County's economic tourism impact from direct visitor spending was approximately \$2.3 billion in 2023. While the Fort isn't an economic driver itself, it's one of many attractions on visitor's lists and often followed by visits to our delicious local restaurants, unique small businesses or scenic lodging options. I firmly believe the investment proposed in LD 1019 is a worthy one given the return on it we see countywide.

As you'll hear from supporters of LD 1019, this bill is more than just money for a fort. This bill aims to preserve a relic of Maine and American history, one that's taught generations of Maine's unique position in armed conflict. My constituents hold great pride in this site and what it means to our community. As their senator, it brings me great pride to bring this legislation forward for your consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill, I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.