



### **Testimony of Kristin Sanborn - LD 1282**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan-Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

My name is Kristin Sanborn, and I am a resident of Monmouth. I serve as a selectboard member and a member of the 1856 Monmouth Academy Rebuilding Committee.

I am here today to respectfully request that this bill be amended to include language allowing towns and communities that identify historic buildings in their Comprehensive Plans to be eligible for funding. The majority of Maine municipalities do not have local Historic Preservation Ordinances and may not meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. However, the Comprehensive Plan is a state-required, thoroughly vetted, and regularly updated document that reflects a community's values and vision for the future.

I speak today on behalf of a building that holds deep personal and historical significance—Monmouth Academy, constructed in 1856. Generations of families have graduated from this school, which may be one of the oldest surviving school buildings in Maine. Over the years, it has produced

graduates who have made contributions both in Maine and around the world, shaping institutions, leading initiatives, and serving in public office.

Despite this rich legacy, our project was denied by the Historic Preservation Committee due to modifications made over time— dating to when it was a public school. Interior walls from 1914 have been altered, and original staircases were removed in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the building's exterior, remains largely intact, preserving its essential historic character.

Importantly, the original language in LD 912, particularly Section 6, makes no mention of eligibility being limited to buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The referendum approved by voters in November 2024 similarly made no such distinction. To now impose such a limitation would, in my opinion, undermine the will of the voters and restrict access to funding in a way that disadvantages many Maine communities.

Furthermore, compliance with National Register guidelines often entails costly requirements for specific materials and methods, placing significant financial burdens on small towns. Expanding eligibility to include historic buildings identified in Comprehensive Plans would allow more communities to access the \$10 million in funding and distribute those resources more equitably across the state.

Our vision for the 1856 Monmouth Academy is to restore it as a community space for voting, municipal meetings, and a wide range of civic and recreational events. We are working diligently to bring this project to fruition, and this change in eligibility would be a crucial step forward.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this request.

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