

Paul Towle
Aroostook Partnership
LD 1998

Honorable Committee Chairs and Members for the IDEAB Committee,

The Aroostook Partnership is a privately funded economic development partnership in Aroostook County with over 80 members working collaboratively to grow our county's economy. Today I am writing in opposition to LD 1998 due to the likely negative impact on further development at the Loring facility should the arch hangar no longer be available to potential new businesses

I listen to or participate regularly in the LDA board meetings in an effort to find more ways to collaborate with LDA and investors to develop the former Loring Air Force Base, Maine's largest industrial park. One of the current strategies is to request acceptance through the FAA into the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). If successful, the FAA will be available to provide significant funding to maintain the airport's runway, lighting and hangar facilities. This is likely the only way to maintain such a large, significant and historic structure as the Arch Hangar.

If turned over to the Loring Air Museum, the possibility of developing aviation-related businesses will be adversely affected. Additionally, the museum will not likely be able to raise the necessary funds needed to maintain the large and aging hangar. The best use of the facility for the area as a whole is to attract businesses that require a large structure like the Arch Hangar, such as aircraft maintenance and repair operations (MRO) businesses, or manufacturing business.

I urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1998 so Aroostook County has the best opportunity to grow its economy through the potential that exists at the Loring Commerce Center.

Respectfully,
Paul Towle
President, Aroostook Partnership