

April 14, 2026

**Re: Support for House Bill 8144**

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Tony Cerino, and I serve as a member of the Board of Directors of Fort Adams Trust. I am writing in strong support of House Bill H8144 and specifically Section 1(l), which would direct \$5 million in Green Economy and Clean Energy Bond funding to the preservation, restoration, and improved public accessibility of historic Fort Adams in Fort Adams State Park in the City of Newport.

Newport is a city with many historically significant structures, but perhaps none more significant than Fort Adams. In our country's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I support the above keeping in mind that Fort Adams is a foundational part of not just our city and state's history, but also our nation's. As a resident, it's a place that provides great comfort, and one of the most serene views of the bay. It's a privilege to be a part of something special.

Fort Adams is the largest coastal fortification in the United States - a National Historic Landmark that has stood at the entrance to Narragansett Bay for nearly 200 years. According to a University of Rhode Island study commissioned by DEM, Fort Adams State Park generates \$63.9 million in annual economic output and supports 750+ jobs, making it the highest-impact site in the Rhode Island State Parks system. It is irreplaceable - as a historic asset, as an economic engine, and as a point of pride for Newport and for Rhode Island.

The Trust has invested millions in stabilization and restoration, and we are committed stewards. This \$5 million investment would fund urgent preservation work and open areas of the fort that cannot safely welcome the public without intervention. Seeing firsthand not only what the Fort is, but also visualizing what it can be, keeps so many people invested in its success.

I sincerely urge the Committee to support and advance H8144 so that Rhode Island voters can affirm their support for this wonderful piece of American history in November. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Tony Cerino

Newport Resident, Salve Regina Alum 2014

Board Member, Fort Adams Trust

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