

April 27, 2026

Re: Support for Senate Bill 3231

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Craig Wonson, and I serve as a member of the Board of Directors of Fort Adams Trust. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 3231, 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.

I have been directly engaged with Fort Adams and its grounds for the better part of a decade. As an active member of the Rhode Island community and a 32-year Marine Corps veteran who takes tremendous pride in our nation's history, I have seen firsthand the impact it has on those who visit. It is a unique place that helps people better understand how our nation evolved and how such historical sites have shaped our community, state, and the broader New England region. We must ensure it remains a powerful resource that continues to educate both current and future generations.

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. But the scale of the fortification is immense and coastal conditions are unforgiving. This \$5 million investment would fund urgent preservation work and open areas of the fort that cannot safely welcome the public without intervention.

I urge the Committee to support and advance SB3231 so that Rhode Island voters have the opportunity to affirm their support for this landmark in November. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Craig R. Wonson

Board Member, Fort Adams Trust

Newport, Rhode Island