



GREATER NEWPORT
Chamber of Commerce

April 27, 2026

Senate Finance Committee
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for Senate Bill 3231 — Fort Adams, Section 1(l): \$5,000,000

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce and the businesses and employers we represent, I am pleased to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 3231. We write in particular support of 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, at Fort State Park within the City of Newport.

The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce is one of the state's largest business advocacy organizations, whose mission is to connect, innovate, enhance, and advocate for the businesses of Greater Newport. As a trusted and reliable institution for over 100 years, the Chamber is a vibrant collective body of the regional business community with nearly 1,000 members representing over 50,000 employees. We work to create valuable strategic partnerships, promote strong economic growth, diversity, and prosperity to serve our members and the community.

Fort Adams Is an Economic Engine for Newport and Rhode Island

Tourism is Rhode Island's largest industry, and Newport is the state's premier tourism destination. Fort Adams is central to that economy. According to a University of Rhode Island economic impact study commissioned by the Rhode Island DEM, Fort Adams State Park generates \$63.9 million in annual economic output and supports 700+ jobs - the single highest economic impact of any site in the Rhode Island State Parks system. It draws 1.3 million visitors annually, including more out-of-state visitors than any other Rhode Island state park. Those visitors spend money in our restaurants, hotels, shops, and transportation businesses. They return year after year. And they come in part because Fort Adams - the largest coastal fortification in the United States and a National Historic Landmark - offers an experience that cannot be found anywhere else.

The Investment Is Urgent and the Need Is Real

Fort Adams is an 80-acre masonry structure that has endured nearly 200 years of coastal weather. The Fort Adams Trust has invested millions in stabilization and restoration, and has been an outstanding steward of this asset. But the scale of the fortification is vast, and continued deterioration threatens public safety, limits visitor access, and restricts the programming and events that drive economic activity throughout Newport.

The \$5 million proposed in S3231 would fund critical preservation work and open areas of the fort that cannot safely welcome visitors without intervention. For the Chamber's members whose livelihoods depend on a vibrant, accessible tourism destination, this is not an abstract preservation question. It is a direct investment in the health of Newport's economy.

A Smart Green Economy Investment

The restoration of Fort Adams is also consistent with the broader goals of the Green Economy and Clean Energy Bond. Preserving and adaptively reusing an existing historic structure reduces embodied carbon, supports skilled local workforce development in the preservation trades, and strengthens the resilience of coastal public infrastructure against the increasing pressures of climate change.

The Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce urges the Committee to advance S3231 and give Rhode Island voters the opportunity to invest in this irreplaceable landmark. We stand ready to support this effort in any way we can.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erin L. Donovan-Boyle".

Erin Donovan-Boyle
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