

April 28, 2026

Re: Support for Senate Bill 3231

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Mike Melillo, 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.

My wife and I are raising our three kids in Portsmouth, and Fort Adams has been part of the rhythm of our family's life — the landmark that greets us every time we head into the harbor by boat, and a place we walk together on weekends. I first came to Newport as a young ballplayer with the Newport Gulls more than two decades ago and never left. Fort Adams is one of the reasons this corner of Rhode Island felt like home from day one, and I want my children, and theirs, to be able to say the same.

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,
Mike Melillo
Board Member, Fort Adams Trust
Portsmouth, Rhode Island