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LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON BILL H.R. 877

Chairman Rahall, Chairman Grijalva and members of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands:

I am honored to have the opportunity to come before you to testify in support of HR 877, and explain why the Quincy Homestead should be included within the boundary of the Adams National Historical Park. I also want to give special thanks to Rep. Delahunt for his invaluable help in sponsoring and supporting this legislation.

The Quincy Homestead is an architectural gem, a colonial-era house on approximately 2 acres of land located in Quincy, Massachusetts, less than a quarter mile from the Adams Park. The oldest section of the Homestead dates from 1686. This part was built by Edmund Quincy II, and then greatly enlarged in 1706 by Edmund Quincy III. The Homestead is the oldest mansion in the City of Quincy, and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2005. It is located within easy walking distance of the Adams Park Visitors Center, and "Peacefield," home to John Adams and John Quincy Adams, is situated.

This house played a crucial role in our early history. Edmund Quincy II was a direct ancestor of John Quincy Adams. Edmund Quincy IV was a close friend of Benjamin Franklin who visited the Homestead. Dorothy Quincy lived in the house during her childhood and teen years before marrying John Hancock, a neighbor just down the street, who became president of the Second Continental Congress, first signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the first governor of Massachusetts.

For generations, the Quincys and the Adamses were neighbors and friends. John Adams was a frequent guest in the Homestead, which was often filled with young men visiting Edmund Quincy IV's five lovely daughters. In his diary of 1760, John Adams berated himself for having spent time cavorting with young women at the Homestead, instead of studying law.

This house will make a significant addition to the Adams Park. It will help with the interpretation of American history not only to Americans, but also to the many

foreign visitors that want to learn about the early history of the United States. Many of the interior scenes in the PBS documentary on John and Abigail Adams in the "American Experience" series, which was aired in 2006, were filmed at the Homestead.

And with the anticipated HBO mini-series on John Adams, we expect thousands of visitors to Quincy to experience the John Adams story in his hometown. The Quincy Homestead, as part of the National Park System, would then be able to welcome these visitors who will be excited to examine more broadly the "place" John Adams called home. –

The Homestead does not duplicate what is on view at the Adams Park. Rather, it complements the Adams Park experience by offering visitors a broader view of American colonial life and culture. For example, because Abigail Adams and Dorothy Quincy Hancock were cousins and contemporaries, the Homestead provides the perfect setting for exploring national themes such as the roles of women.

As the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association rescued George Washington's home from destruction and development, The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts saved the Quincy Homestead in 1904 from being torn down, purchased it, renovated it under the guidance of noted historical architect, Joseph Everett Chandler, and entered into a long-term partnership with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that has lasted 104 years. The Commonwealth owns the Homestead, and is responsible for capital improvements and the exterior preservation of the house. The Colonial Dames maintain the interior, furnish it with historic furniture, paintings and decorative arts, and interpret its important history for visitors.

There are problems, however, with the present arrangement. From the point of view of the Commonwealth, the Homestead is "an orphan asset" a one-of-a-kind site which does not fit in with other properties in its network of parks. Thus the State recognizes that the Homestead more logically belongs with the Adams Park, and therefore supports this bill and is willing to deed the Homestead to the Adams Park.

In recent years the Colonial Dames have been unable to provide full or part-time personnel at the Homestead.

Even given these extreme limitations, the Homestead was able to attract over 1,200

visitors last year. Occasionally it has been included in the Adams Park trolley route, and on those day's attendance triples over the usual numbers. Importantly, it has been noted that when given the opportunity, visitors show great interest in the Homestead as part of the Adams Park experience.

Because of the Homestead's physical proximity to the Adams Park, the staff at the Park can easily administer the Homestead and incorporate it into the Adams Park tour. Quincy officials and residents love and appreciate all the Homestead offers, and are very proud to have it in their city. These are some of the reasons why the city of Quincy and the Dames, support this bill.

History, literature, the arts, science, cultural and natural resources, and our residents' diverse ethnic heritage make for a myriad of cultural offerings for visitors who explore Quincy. Where else can one learn about the lifestyle of one of our early patriots and greatest Founding Fathers, understand him as a man dedicated to his community, all represented by the Quincy Homestead, just minutes away from John Adams' "Peace field." The story being told at the Adams Park, not only deals with John Adams, his family and the role he played in our country's history, but also focuses on his fellow patriots and the roles they played in founding our nation.

The Quincy Homestead is a national treasure. Its majestic Georgian frontispiece and gambrel roof, with distinctive dormer windows, give the structure a stately and substantial appearance. It is one of the few houses in Massachusetts in which the elements of a 17th-century building are still clearly visible, although as the house was enlarged they have been surrounded by a later style. The house is an excellent illustration of how architectural styles developed during the colonial period.

As an extraordinary part of our country's early history, the Homestead is a natural fit with the Adams National Historical Park. As part of the Park, the public will have much greater access to the Homestead. The house has recently undergone a major restoration. It will come to the National Park Service in superb physical condition, meaning any incremental cost to the Park Service will be minimal. And the Colonial Dames stand ready to continue their long involvement with the property and to support it - this time in conjunction with the National Park Service rather than the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Moving the Homestead from the Commonwealth to the Adams Park is a long-overdue step with substantial benefits to both the Adams Park and to the Quincy Homestead.

I can't say how strongly I urge your support for H.R. 877.

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