

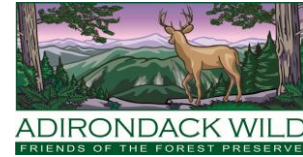
February 24, 2026

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie,

We, the undersigned organizations based in the Adirondacks, wish to conditionally support Governor Hochul's proposal for a land exchange amendment to our NYS Constitution that removes three closed prison facilities, Camp Gabriels, Mount McGregor, and Moriah Shock, from the provisions of Article 14, Section 1, the "Forever Wild" clause, of our State Constitution.

By removing these facilities from the Adirondack Forest Preserve through a constitutional amendment, the state legislature can create the potential for a three-fold net public benefit: 1. Add new infrastructure and resources to the communities in which these prison facilities lie, including affordable work-force housing; 2. Add significant new land for permanent protection within the Forest Preserve; and 3. Restore integrity to the underpinning clause of Article XIV of the state's constitution, which declares the lands of the state within the Adirondack and Catskill Park counties to be "Forever Wild." These three net benefits will best serve the interests of community residents, the people of New York, and all who visit the Adirondacks.

Leaving these three sites sitting vacant and deteriorating will neither commemorate their past nor provide a future resource for the communities in which they are located. We face an affordable housing shortage in the Adirondacks, and this amendment can and should address that urgent need and public benefit. These sites have buildings and infrastructure, including significant and historic existing buildings, to provide quality workforce housing and serve as community resources. Removing them from the Forest Preserve will also allow the opportunity to honor the lives of the individuals incarcerated at each location and honest interpretation of our state's history of imprisonment and the impact of the Rockefeller Drug Laws.

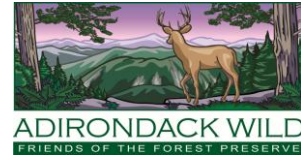


Both Mount McGregor and Camp Gabriels are Eligible National Register Historic Districts and the rehabilitation of historic buildings on those campuses would qualify for the NYS and Federal Historic Tax Credits. As you know, those Historic Tax Credits are powerful economic development incentives and pair well with the NYS and Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

Each of the three facilities can and should include interpretation as places of memory regarding our state's history of incarceration, the region's role in housing incarcerated individuals, and the contributions those individuals made to our region. Camp Gabriels and Mount McGregor have additional institutional history as places of healing for individuals with Tuberculosis. Camp Gabriels was the first sanatorium in the Adirondacks to admit Black patients. More recently, Camp Gabriels and Moriah Shock housed individuals who contributed significantly to maintaining and improving roads, trails, land, and buildings throughout the Adirondacks. The work of these individuals should be honored and recognized at those locations.

We support compensating for the removal of developed Forest Preserve lands by adding at least 2,500 acres of new undeveloped, wild forest lands to the Adirondack Forest Preserve. The recently adopted Constitutional Amendment for the Mount Van Hoevenberg Winter Olympic Sports Complex also required the State to purchase 2,500 acres of new wild lands to add to the Forest Preserve in the Adirondack Park.

We look forward to discussing any questions and/or concerns about this proposed Constitutional Amendment. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Sincerely,

Erin M. Tobin
Executive Director
Adirondack Architectural Heritage

Claudia K. Braymer
Executive Director
Protect the Adirondacks! Inc.

Elizabeth Cooper
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Pete Nelson
Chair, Co-Founder
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Raul "Rocci" Aguirre
Executive Director
Adirondack Council

cc: Governor Kathy Hochul
Senator Pete Harckham, Chairman, Committee on Environmental Conservation
Senator Julia Salazar, Chair, Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction
Senator Daniel G. Stec, Ranking Member, Committee on Environmental Conservation
Assemblymember Deborah Glick, Chair, Committee on Environmental Conservation
Assemblymember Erik M. Dilan, Chair, Committee on Corrections
Assemblymember Matthew Simpson, Ranking Member, Committee on Environmental Conservation
Assemblymember Carrie Woerner, 113th Assembly District
Assemblymember Michael S. Cashman, 115th Assembly District