

June 28, 2014

The Honorable Susan Collins  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

I am writing to inform you that the Board of Directors of the Maine Innkeepers Association recently voted to endorse the most recent proposal by Elliotsville Plantation Inc. (EPI) to create a national park and national recreation area on land east of Baxter State Park.

We have been pleased to learn of the outreach that EPI has done to residents and businesses in the Katahdin Region, which has helped EPI shape the proposal and earn local support—including from the Katahdin Area Chamber of Commerce.

We recognize that the project is still a work in progress and that congressional legislation will be needed. However, the Maine Innkeepers Association supports the current concept, which could be a significant new destination for people interested in seeing a spectacular part of inland Maine that is often overlooked.

Creation of a national park and national recreation area on up to 150,000 acres east of Baxter State Park would introduce visitors to a landscape of vast forestlands, beautiful rivers, breathtaking scenery, stunning wildlife, and diverse recreation opportunities. We are pleased that snowmobiling and hunting would be allowed in the national recreation area, while the national park would feature the many wonderful experiences and programs that visitors of national parks have come to know and expect.

Maine innkeepers and other businesses benefit substantially from tourism associated with Acadia National Park. Similarly, a new national park and national recreation area would provide significant benefits to communities in the area and along travel routes.

Data suggests that people who visit national parks spend, on average, a day in the park and two or three additional days in the area visiting other attractions. As such, a new national park and national recreation area could benefit many recreation, lodging, retail, and hospitality businesses across Maine. This would be a welcome development for rural communities and businesses that face challenges in the current economy.

Many of our members did not support earlier, larger concepts for a national park in northern Maine, but EPI's proposal is a manageable size and has garnered local support, which is important to us. We hope that you will support this project as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

Greg Dugal  
President and CEO  
Maine Innkeepers Association