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September 14, 2026

Subject: Letter of Support for H.R. 1031 Federal Park Designation

To the Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for designating Fort Ontario's historic grounds containing the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter Museum as a unit of the National Park System. As the nation's only emergency refugee shelter established during World War II, this site holds a singular position in global history. Elevating Fort Ontario to a national designation will ensure that its profound narrative of human survival, international diplomacy, and American humanitarianism receives the global visibility it rightfully deserves.

Beyond its immense historical value, this designation serves as a vital economic catalyst for Oswego, New York, and the surrounding region. Being a National Park naturally shifts a site from a regional attraction to an international destination, drawing a steady influx of historians and tourists. This increase in visibility will help lead to a powerful economic multiplier effect, directly boosting revenue for local hotels, restaurants, retail shops, and small businesses. We have seen this success firsthand with nearby properties like the Fort Stanwix National Monument, which injects millions of dollars annually into its gateway community, proving that national park investments yield sustainable economic dividends.

Furthermore, integrating Fort Ontario into the National Park Service framework will introduce permanent federal resources, infrastructure investments, and professional programming that relieve financial burdens on our local and state agencies. The resulting increase in tourism and operational demand will create stable jobs in the hospitality and service sectors, driving regional wealth and enhancing the community's overall quality of life.

For these reasons and many others, I enthusiastically support this designation and urge all stakeholders to advance H.R. 1031 to make this designation a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Stahl", with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending from the end.

Tim Stahl
Director of Community Development, Tourism & Planning