



**Testimony of the Mystic Coast and Country Travel Industry Association Inc.
Before the Commerce Committee
Regarding SB 550
AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR
THE CONNECTICUT CRUISE SHIP TASK FORCE
March 11, 2008**

My name is Chris Jennings, President of Mystic Coast and Country Travel Industry Association (MCC), and offer the following testimony on **SB 550** with regard to **AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE CONNECTICUT CRUISE SHIP TASK FORCE**.

Mystic Coast & Country is a privately funded trade association whose mission is to promote and strengthen the tourism industry in the region. We represent more than 300 businesses, including attractions, casinos, entertainment venues, cultural institutions, hotels, inns, campgrounds and restaurants, as well as the businesses that support the tourism industry through their products and services.

As many of you may know, Mystic Coast & Country provided the \$15,000 matching funds to the Task Force in 2007 that enabled the Task Force to host the many port of calls last spring and fall. Our Board of Directors committed to this effort because of the impact of the visits, and the potential for future leisure and business travel visitation.

We are encouraged by the Governor and Legislature's recent attention to Tourism, but significantly more needs to be done if we are to realize our potential as an economic engine for the state.

- We support increased funds to the Ct Cruise Ship Task Force to increase tourism business activity to the port of New London, and throughout the Mystic Country region.

By supporting this funding mechanism, the legislature can ensure that this vital state industry can compete nationally and can continue to contribute to the state's economy.

Thank you very much for your consideration.