

Testimony in Support Of  
SB 550 – An Act Appropriating Funds For the  
Connecticut Cruise Ship Task Force

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Good morning Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and members of The Commerce Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the City of New London regarding Senate Bill 550, which I submit is a vital and necessary component of the continued surge in cruise ship tourism and the resultant positive economic impact for our city, the region and the state.

From the arrival of the first cruise ship, Regal Empress, to the Port of New London in September of 2002; to the visit of the Holland America luxury cruise ship, ms Maasdam, in May of 2004; to the seven (7) cruise ship visits in 2007; the people of the City of New London and the Connecticut Cruise Ship Task Force have worked tirelessly to promote cruise ship visits to the Port of New London.

Last year, the cruise ship visits brought more than 22,000 passengers to the City of New London and Southeastern Connecticut. A study by Mitchell College marketing students concluded that the visits were a boom for the local business with passengers spending approximately \$1,500,000 dollars in Connecticut. The economic impact extends from the Connecticut/Rhode Island border continuing along Southeastern Connecticut to Essex.

The cruise ship calls have brought out hundreds of volunteers to serve in such capacities as docents, greeters, and Welcoming Center staff. The visits have generated positive press for New London, the region and the state in local and regional media including the Boston and New York markets. The impacts of the visits serve as a great selling point for potential new downtown New London business.

Eight (8) cruise ships are due to visit the Port Of New London in from May to November in 2008 with more than 12,000 passengers who will spend approximately \$ 1,000,000 in Connecticut. The support costs for these visits are in excess of \$100,000. In addition, if we are to grow the business, funds are needed for marketing to attract ships for 2009 and 2010. Your support of this bill will provide funds for such items as buses for transporting passengers from State Pier to City Center, insurance, advertising, brochures, future marketing efforts and the stipend for the executive director of The Connecticut Cruise Ship Task Force Director.

I believe that with your support and that of the General Assembly, the infusion of these dollars will allow for continued growth of cruise ship tourism and increase the economic impact on our city, the region and the state.

Kevin J. Cavanagh  
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