



December 9, 2009

To: Senator Toni Harp, co-chairman Representative John Geragosian, co-chairman

Testimony of Helen Higgins, Executive Director, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation in OPPOSITION to three parts of Governor Rell's Deficit Mitigation Plan for Fiscal Year 2010:

I want to begin by saying the shoes you and your colleagues are wearing in trying to deal with the state's budget crisis are not ones I and others here today testifying could wear. We do understand the Impossible Situation you find yourselves in regarding the budget. My goal here today is to perhaps help lay out some priorities for what gets cut and what doesn't, if that can be an option.

In discussing why three areas should not be cut, my criteria are two: Do the proposed cuts impact JOBS? And do the proposed cuts impact Private Investment?

At issue: 1- The Governor proposes diverting \$4.8 million from the Community Investment Act to the General Fund. For the historic preservation component of this fund, this cut eliminates at least \$1.2 million in historic preservation grants. Every grant involves a JOB – employing someone or some firm to perform a task, from planning for a building restoration to planning for community revitalization. From architects to structural engineers to planning firms and historic consultants, these grants employ all of them. In addition, a cut of \$1.2 million in historic preservation grants cuts a minimum of another \$1.2 million in matching private investment with restoration grants leveraging at least four times the initial state investment.

2 - The Governor proposes cutting the line items of the Connecticut Humanities Council and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation by another 35% making total cuts to these line items at 50%. We have already BEEN cut. Both of these line items are for Grants to historic preservation planning projects and cultural heritage museum projects – cuts in these areas could well set back the heritage community for years.

At the Connecticut Trust ALONE, as I speak, we have 54 applications for our Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants. From these applications we have counted, as far as we can tell, approximately 108 jobs for consulting on specific projects. And, some of these grants are for energy audits in historic municipal buildings. Those grants will leverage federal stimulus dollars through the weatherization programs. We have already absorbed cuts to our line item. Further cuts will have impact across the state in the 46 towns from where we have received grant applications.

To cut both the Humanities Council and the Trust another 35% would be to eliminate at least \$ 1.5 million for historic preservation and cultural heritage grants. The minimum leverage lost would be another \$1.5 million.

And, in addition to the loss of new jobs is the potential to create further unemployment - Many heritage organizations are one step away from shutting down as it is.

So my message is this: please evaluate the economic impact on Jobs and Stimulating Private Investment when looking at cutting the Community Investment Act and the line items of the Trust and Humanities Council. Please determine these cuts are not a wise choice.

Helen Higgins, Executive Director: hhiggins@cttrust.org; 203-562-6312.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned at the bottom left of the page.