



Agency Budget Hearing
Appropriations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

February 17, 2009

Testimony of
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Connecticut Science Center

Background

The Connecticut Science Center (CSC), a state-initiated science learning destination and economic development project, opens in one of the state's economically challenged urban centers amid high anticipation this spring. The CSC's operations rely on a combination of funds, more than 85% from sources other than the State of Connecticut. The CSC has requested an annual State appropriation of \$1.2 million. The Governor's proposed budget provides \$237,000 dedicated to CSC in 2009-10, and eliminates the CSC's line item appropriation in FY 2010-11, when CSC would instead apply prospectively for a portion of grant funds administered by the proposed Culture/Tourism section of the Department of Economic and Community Development.

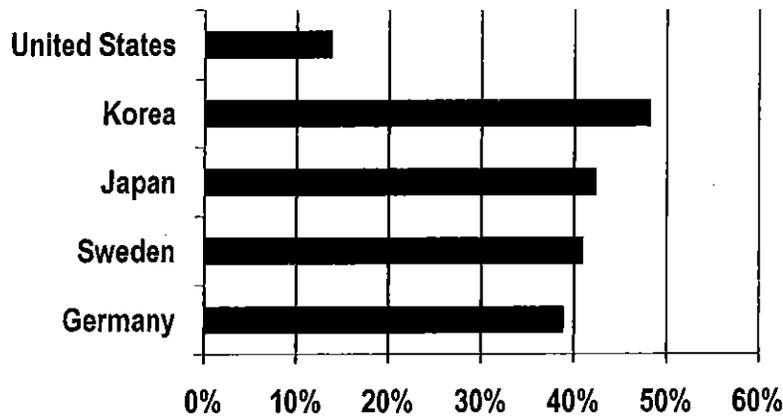
Results Summary

The Connecticut Science Center's past performance and operations, starting this spring, respond to the State of Connecticut's Results Based Accountability Initiative.

1. Before opening its doors, the CSC has already leveraged the State of Connecticut's investment into \$45 million of new funding from businesses, individuals, foundations and the federal government to create the cultural destination of a generation. It has created hundreds of construction jobs and replaced an undeveloped urban Brownfield site with an iconic architectural landmark for Connecticut.
2. Every year, starting in FY 2009-10, the CSC will serve hundreds of thousands of visitors, generate new revenue and spending, and provide jobs, all producing more tax revenues for the State of Connecticut than its proposed \$1.2 million state appropriation.
3. The CSC is specifically aligned with the State's Science Education Framework, creating a powerful experiential learning asset for school teachers to help Connecticut students meet new science learning requirements. At the same time, the CSC has already trained nearly 1,000 educators from schools across the state to be more successful science teachers for these children.
4. The CSC has engaged an unprecedented array of businesses, individuals and leaders from throughout Connecticut in the cause of preparing the state and our children for the economy of tomorrow. They are responding with urgency and commitment to the increasing gap in science learning and ability between US and foreign students and economies. The Science Center is a beacon of innovation in a state built on innovation, but at risk of losing its leading edge.

Imagine, Discover, Explore

Science Graduate Degrees Awarded
(by percent of all graduate degrees)



Source: Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001.

Leadership

At a time when the world's economic crisis has brought rampant pessimism, the opening of the Connecticut Science Center this spring will signal Connecticut's strength, foresight and bold commitment to the future - with optimism. The CSC has become a rallying point for leading corporate and private citizens of Connecticut to join with the state to invest with hope in the future.

The CSC will be a statewide science education institution that will have a demonstrable impact on the economic future of the State, providing more science learning experiences, a richer pipeline of promising young scientists, better quality of life for Connecticut families, more science based employment, and more tourism.

Individuals, families, businesses, foundations and organizations statewide have responded to the State of Connecticut's invitation to join together to create and sustain the Connecticut Science Center. Their expectations for the institution and the strength of this sustaining public/private partnership are as high as their respective financial investments in the Science Center.

The State of Connecticut's founding investment of \$122.5 million attracted tens of millions of dollars in private contributions for a vital cause, a crucial public benefit, and the promise of a lasting public/private partnership to sustain it.

Economic Impact & Return on Investment

The CSC's Results-Based business plan projects a return of more than 6-to-1 on the proposed annual State support of \$1.2 million: State funds will cover 14% of total CSC annual expenses (compared to nearly 30% for comparable institutions nationally), while visitors, donors and other funders will pay for the other 86% of operating costs. This highly beneficial ratio compares to a private/public ratio of less than 3-to-1 for comparable institutions. Few State of Connecticut investments generate a return of more than 6 times expense, before accounting for job creation, tax revenues and long-term benefits to workforce and economic development and quality of life.

With an annual expenditure of \$8.5 million, 100 employees, and a minimum multiplier effect applied to these expenses, the CSC will generate at least as many new state tax dollars as the \$1.2 million requested annual state appropriation, and probably more. The longer term benefits of a successful CSC to improving education, advancing tourism, helping other institutions, and to the economic and social quality of life in Connecticut are immeasurable. The CSC will improve Connecticut's ability to compete as a place to live for families by offering a world class family learning destination.

A Record of Results

Together with the State, the CSC's Board of Trustees, staff, contractors, donors and partners have led the creation of a learning destination that will be the legacy of this generation:

- Created an iconic and green building symbolizing the "promise of science", and a future of greater expectations.
- Designed and fabricated 150 hands-on learning exhibits that will inspire and educate hundreds of thousands of visitors each year through everyday science that connects with youths and adults.
- In the midst of project development, responded to the economic climate by strategically right-sizing its operating budget by freezing salaries, reducing staff, minimizing benefits, installing facility efficiencies, streamlining management and programs, limiting all variable expenses, and aggressively seeking additional revenues from multiple sources.
- Developed and continually refined a mission-driven Master Plan, with a focus on educational and business outcomes, including service quality, educational results, visitor attendance, private fundraising and financial measures. The five year operating plan has been deemed "prudent", "very reasonable", and "without excess" by business, education, government and community leaders who have contributed to and scrutinized the plan.
- Trained nearly 1,000 teachers in teaching science through "inquiry", and developed exhibits and programs to support Connecticut schools, the State Science Framework and its examinations.
- Generated significant public support and excitement for both the Science Center and the field of science, as evidenced by the sale of over 1,000 memberships and an email network of more than 7,000 friends, months before opening.

Conclusion

The CSC will generate at least six-times the State's annual public investment in the form of additional spending by others, provide jobs to Connecticut residents, increase state tax revenue, improve learning opportunities in science, and lead to better workforce readiness and economic opportunities for the state, its businesses and its citizens in the future.