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February 17, 2009

Senator Harp, Chair
Senator Hartley, Vice-Chair
Representative Geragosian, Chair
Representative Bartlett, Vice-Chair
Representative Heinrich, Vice-Chair
Representative Roldan, Vice Chair
Members of the Appropriations Committee
State of Connecticut Legislature

Re: FY 2010 – FY 2011 Budget

Good evening Senator Harp, Senator Hartley, Representatives Geragosian, Bartlett, Heinrich and Roldan, and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am a voting member of the 12th senate district and 3rd congressional district and am here tonight to speak about the impact of the proposed budget on the field of preservation and the architectural profession.

My business, Nelson Edwards Company Architects, LLC has a fifteen year history of helping preserve historic buildings and sites. Our work ranges from the New Haven City Hall to the Putnam Memorial State Park to numerous municipalities, land trusts and churches and other social service organizations. The work that we do is funded through the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (State Historic Preservation Office) as well as through the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

The money comes in the form of seed money for studies that define a building's potential to be adaptively re-used in new and financially viable ways, and bricks and mortar money that funds actual restorations and conversions. The money always comes in the form of matching grants that proactively put the onus on the building / site owner to provide the matching funds before a grant is awarded. There is no free lunch.

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As most of you know the money for preservation recently has come through the Connecticut Investment Fund which is legislated to direct money from land record filings into preservation, conservation and affordable housing. While the proposed state budget has been reduced by 16 – 17%, the money for preservation has been virtually eliminated. Point in fact end the budget for the Connecticut Trust has been reduced from \$118,000.00 in FY09-10 to zero.

We all acknowledge that these are hard times and that there is no room for "luxury line items". Preservation in the State of Connecticut is about jobs. Preservation is about economic growth. Preservation is about attracting people to the state for tourism who will spend money. Without this money a tremendous number of people – architects, engineers, historians, archaeologists, general contractors, and sub-contracting specialties such as electricians, framers, roofers, HVAC contractors - will join the ranks of the unemployed and this state will find itself having to cover the costs of unemployed workers. This is not a cost savings. This is a costly mistake.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sara O. Nelson, AIA
Principal