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**Testimony of Lucianne Lavin, Ph.D.  
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*Regarding Governor Rell's Budget proposal for merging CCT with DECD  
February 17, 2009*

I am writing to you regarding Gov. Rell's proposed merger of Connecticut Culture and Tourism (CCT) with the Dept. of Economic and Community Development (DECD). As an archaeologist and the director of research & collections of a CT museum for which tourism is of great economic importance, I have deep concerns about this proposal. Here are some of them:

1) Because the phrase "historic preservation" is not in CCT's title, it is sometimes unclear that the Commission on Culture and Tourism (a) includes an Historic Preservation & Museum division and (b) has a federally mandated State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which oversees all state and federal (CEPA and NEPA) projects in its review authority to ensure that projects are in compliance with environmental laws concerning archaeological and historical resources. CCT is often viewed as a tourism and arts organization, but its historical preservation division is an important one, particularly in respect to its oversight responsibilities for state and federal cultural resource management legislation. Significant information on Connecticut's cultural heritage is at stake if the SHPO staff is cut or unrecognized within another agency.

2) Because of the SHPO environmental review function, putting it into an agency over which it has review authority is a clear conflict of interest. To effectively and properly protect CT's heritage resources, SHPO must be independent of all state departments over which it has such review authority.

3) Tourism once was under the auspices of DECD. It was removed because it apparently was not thriving there. Under CCT tourism has progressed, due for the most part to its greater visibility and funding. Let us not make the same mistake again. We need tourism, particularly cultural and heritage tourism, to bring money into the state. But to do so they need to be visible....a commission devoted to fostering culture and tourism has been doing just that. We need to follow the lead of states like Massachusetts and Virginia, whose expanded programs in heritage tourism have paid off economically by promoting extra-state visitation and increased revenues for their state coffers.

Thank you.