

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
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Testimony Regarding
The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Thank you for allowing John & I to appear before you today to discuss the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. As you know, the arts, tourism and historic preservation support Connecticut's quality of life and helps in the creation and retention of jobs and generates revenue for the state and towns and municipalities.

Currently, the commission has 34 full-time positions and 10 part-time positions funded through the General Fund. The commission also has 7 federally funded positions and 2 positions funded by the Community Investment Act.

The Commission operates as a grant making and tax credit issuing agency for both the federal and state governments. In fiscal year 2009, the Commission awarded 648 grants totally over \$9.7 million to organizations, individuals and municipalities in support of the arts, historic preservation, film and tourism and issued tax credits for use in furthering the film industry and historic preservation initiatives. The Commission's grant awards, comprised of state funds, federal funds and community investment funds, lead to private investment that helps in the creation and retention of jobs and generates income for municipalities and the state.

The Commission's grant awards help develop and strengthen the arts in Connecticut and make artistic experiences widely available to residents and visitors. The Commission has 12 arts focused grant programs, funded by Basic Cultural Resources and the National Endowment for the Arts. Basic Cultural Resources is the appropriation within the Commission's general fund budget which supports the arts. In Fiscal Year 2009, the Commission awarded over \$6 million to organizations, individuals, municipalities and schools. The state's investment is vital to leverage private funding to these organizations. In fact, for every state dollar

invested in arts organization, eleven dollars (\$11) of private investment is realized. Through one particular program entitled Organizational Support Grant program, the Commission awarded over \$3.4 million to 130 arts organizations in fiscal year 2009. Those organizations, which use 39% of their state funding for salaries, provide 793 full time jobs and 1,151 part time jobs.

Funded through the Culture, Tourism and Arts Grants appropriation of the Commission's general fund budget, the Commission was able to further its marketing investment through two marketing grant programs available to all our constituents, for profit and non-profit. These grants are designed to assist organizations in their marketing efforts, create partnerships with our constituents, support product development efforts and extend our own marketing efforts. In fiscal year 2009, the Commission awarded 42 grants totaling \$900,000.00 to support marketing endeavors to, among others, the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk for billboards and advertisements in free standing inserts into newspapers in the greater metro-New York area; Yale University Athletics Department for radio and television ads to promote the NCAA Men's Division I ice hockey east regional tournament held in Bridgeport; Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium for newspaper ads, promotional videos and television spots; and the Florence Griswold Museum for advertisements in the free standing inserts.

With this appropriation, the Commission also supported 13 statewide projects (\$855,000.00) which furthered the Commission's mission. The Strategic Initiative Grant program provides financial assistance to encourage and nurture artistic, tourism and cultural programs and activities which advance culture and tourism in Connecticut. Programs supported by the Commission in fiscal year 2009 included CT Public Television in the production of All Things Connecticut, CPTV's premier prime-time show featuring the sights, sounds, history, attractions and arts in Connecticut, along with the production of a 30-minute original documentary on *The Moderns* with host Diane Smith; the combined effort of the Hartford Stage, Goodspeed, Long Wharf, Westport Country Playhouse and Yale Repertory Theatre, to create and launch a website – CTheatreNow.com - to promote attendance with discount ticket offers; the Hebron Historic Society to produce a high quality film and accompanying educational materials, entitled Testimonies of a Quiet New England Town, depicting the abduction, rescue and emancipation of the slaves, Cesar and Lowis Peters and their eight children, in Hebron, Connecticut in 1787; and the CT Trust for Historic Preservation to work with three (3) municipalities to develop and test a template for a community cultural plan and action plan that focuses on community and regional cultural development as an essential component of economic development and recovery.

In fiscal year 2009, the Commission used the Statewide Marketing appropriation to continue its commitment to making tourism a leading economic contributor and a source of pride for Connecticut. Those funds supported necessary research; product development; and marketing, including the state's official tourism website, the annual vacation guide, creative development and media buys. From 2001 to 2009, there was positive growth of 5.2% per year in Connecticut's vibrant and sustainable tourism industry. For every dollar invested through the summer of 2009, tourism in Connecticut was generating \$9.30 million in state and local taxes, \$507 million in gross state product and \$378 million in personal income.

The leisure and hospitality industry, which includes arts, entertainment, dining, lodging and sports, employed over 137,000 people as of November 2009. According to the state's Department of Labor, arts and entertainment kept pace with the health-care sector for job growth year after year and the industries have increased jobs by 4% in the past year.

The Governor's budget proposes the reduction, from fiscal year 2010 levels, of overall funding to the Commission and those organizations which receive direct funding through the Commission's budget. The Governor's budget reflects an understanding of the importance of the arts, tourism and historic preservation to our state's revitalization and economy. The proposed reductions are to balance the need to continue to support these industries while accommodating the state's dire fiscal crisis.

The Commission and its constituents are keenly aware of the economic situation facing Connecticut today. The previous reductions in the Commission's budget have made the Commission more even creative in our attempts to do more with less. For example, to make up for a loss in funds, the Commission is working with our partners to provide more educational and professional development opportunities to our constituents. We are constantly working to develop and enhance opportunities for collaboration, coordination and growth in the arts, historic preservation, and tourism. Our programs and services emphasize partnership, industry input and public benefit. By serving its constituents, promoting Connecticut and creating a network of committed partners, the Commission's efforts strengthen and preserve our cultural assets while creating and maintaining jobs and generating economic returns to municipalities and the state.

Connecticut must continue its commitment to invest in our culture and history for future generations. Governor Rell's proposal offers our state and the opportunity to maintain these important efforts. In doing so, we

preserve the cultural assets that contribute to our citizens' quality of life,
while boosting one of the state's most critical economic engines.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee today.