



February 16, 2010

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 two of Governor Rell's Proposed Mid-Term Adjustments:

I want to begin by saying 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 to consider in deciding how deeply to cut various line items.

The Governor proposes cutting by 40% the line items of the Connecticut Humanities Council and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. Both of these appropriations are for Grants to historic preservation planning projects and cultural heritage museum projects – Such a large cut to both line items could well set back the heritage community for years as well as have an impact on investment in preservation projects in communities across the state.

At the Connecticut Trust, we have just awarded 40 grants and from our line item, more than the amount of the cut. So, in fact, if the proposed cut remains, we will have to pass on that cut to our grantees.

Historic preservation is a significant job generator: it is labor intensive, not materials intensive. The Trust's investment in preservation projects leads to employment of architects, engineers, contractors – from plumbers to energy star experts.

For example, our \$300,000 in grants awarded will result in 73 short term jobs. (or for every \$4100 invested one short term position is created.)

More impressive: 83% of the grants (33 out of 40) we awarded will result in further actual construction. Estimating \$500,000 per project and 19 jobs per half million, our HPTAG can lead to 627 construction and construction related jobs in the future.

Let me give you a sampling of the projects affected: Planning for upgrade energy systems at the Hispanic Health Center in Hartford, conditions assessment and an energy audit on the historic building on Wethersfield Ave that houses the CT Community for Addiction Recovery, an energy audit for the historic town hall in Essex, a nomination for a National Register district in Village Creek, Norwalk, an assessment of repair needs at the Old Lighthouse in Stonington, an evaluation of how to re-use and rehab a building in downtown Torrington across from the Warner Theater. There are grants to historical organizations in New Canaan, Greenwich, Bethlehem, Barkhamsted, Gaylordsville, New Haven, Kent etc etc etc. The Connecticut Trust line item isn't that big to begin with but its statewide impact is significant.

My message is this: please evaluate the economic impact on Jobs when looking at cutting the line items of the Trust and Humanities Council. Please determine that the depth of these cuts is not a wise choice.

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