

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

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Thank you for allowing me to speak to 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.

The Commission operates primarily as a grant making agency for state and federal funds and serves to market and promote the state to in-state and out of state residents. We devote our resources to serving Connecticut's cultural institutions, organizations, municipalities and individuals through funding, technical assistance and promotion. The arts, culture, heritage and historic preservation are critical to the state's economy – these labor centric industries create jobs, generate tax revenue and make Connecticut a place where businesses and people want to be. They enhance education and can lead the way to urban revitalization and smart growth.

The Commission offers funding opportunities to organizations, individuals and municipalities to support arts, heritage, preservation, tourism and culture in the form of 16 grant programs funded through state and federal funds and the Community Investment Act. In fiscal year 2010, the Commission awarded over \$6.4 million in grants to organizations, individuals and municipalities in support of the arts and tourism and historic preservation initiatives. These grant awards lead to private investment that helps in the creation and retention of jobs and generates income for municipalities and the state.

The Commission offers 8 arts focused grant programs, funded by Basic Cultural Resources; Culture, Tourism and Arts Grant; and the National Endowment for

the Arts. Basic Cultural Resources and Culture, Tourism and Arts are the two General Fund appropriations to the Commission for grants. In fiscal year 2010, the Commission awarded over \$2.1 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. According to a study conducted by the Americans for the Arts in 2009, there are over 40,000 arts identified jobs in Connecticut, which are part of our creative economy of designers, artists, actors, and etc. Also, there are over 9,520 arts-related businesses in Connecticut, which employ over 38,000 people. Of 127 arts organizations receiving operating support from the Commission in fiscal year 2010 (5 organizations have not reported yet), they account for 700 full-time, 2,413 part-time jobs (500 FTE) and nearly 12,000 volunteers in the state. Our 127 General Operating Support grant recipient organizations spent over \$61 million on salaries and \$16 million on contracted professionals last year.

With the Culture, Tourism and Arts appropriation, the Commission supported eight (8) statewide projects (over \$160,000) 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. These projects must cross disciplines and require a 1-1 match. Programs supported the Strategic Initiative Grant program in fiscal year 2010 included Hygienic Art's "Parade Parade: A Community Celebration of New London's historic Parade Plaza" (New London); Norwalk Historical Society's research and design for signage at the Mill Hill historic site (Norwalk); Barnum Museum Foundation and Mark Twain House & Museum's "Connecticut Icons: PT Barnum and Mark Twain" year-long celebration of Twain/Barnum's birthdays in 2010 (Bridgeport & Hartford); and New Haven Symphony Orchestra & Mystic Aquarium's collaborative "Aquatic Dances" at Mystic Aquarium (New Haven & Mystic).

Despite the elimination of the Statewide Marketing account, the Commission continued its commitment to making tourism a leading economic contributor and a source of pride for Connecticut. The Commission continued to partner with the tourism industry to encourage strategic investment in the tourism industry, so as to ensure that Connecticut is a destination for leisure and business travelers.

The Commission has been working to improve the State's official tourism website, CTvisit.com. The site receives annually over 2 million visitors from within Connecticut and beyond. To be launched early in March, visitors to the site will experience a more modern, engaging and results oriented on-line travel planning resource. The new site has been developed based in analysis of our existing site and our competitors' sites and research into evolving customer expectations. We know that the current market and consumer are different and we must constantly evolve and respond with new offerings and new ways of

communicating those offerings. The new site includes new content areas, mapping and social network interfaces.

In 2010, the Commission awarded over \$836,000 in marketing grants to support the marketing efforts of arts, tourism, heritage and cultural organizations across the state including the marketing efforts of New Britain Museum of American Art, Yale University – Peabody Museum, Florence Griswold Museum, Stepping Stones Museum for Children, The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, Connecticut River Museum, Connecticut Landmarks, Kent Film Festival, Hartford Stage, Connecticut Science Center, Lyman Orchards, New Haven Road Race, City of New London and Mystic Aquarium. 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 the Cooperative Marketing Grant program and Challenge Grant program 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. As part of the Cooperative Marketing Grant program, the Commission developed the opportunity for grantees to advertise in the Free Standing Insert – *Getaway Guide* for fall/winter and spring/summer. The *Getaway Guide* reached an estimated readership of 5.5 million people in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The additional integrated on-line efforts included 525,000 emails to opt-in subscribers interested in Connecticut tourism information and an interactive version of the FSI on CTvisit.com. Over 290,000 inquiries were received collectively among the 57 advertisers in the FSI.

The emphasis of the Governor's budget is jobs and economic development and the budget recognizes the impact of the arts, culture, tourism and historic preservation on the state's economy. As I previously stated, the arts, culture, tourism and historic preservation create and retain jobs, generate tax revenue, revitalize communities and also make Connecticut a place where businesses and people want to be.

Governor Malloy's budget includes a \$15 million investment in marketing – marketing which supports culture, tourism, arts, heritage, restaurants, hotels, state parks and all the great things that Connecticut has to offer.

Tourism in Connecticut generates \$11.5 billion in total traveler and tourism spending

- Generates \$1.15 billion in state and local tax revenue
- Employs 110,775 people (6.5% of state total) in Connecticut
- Each Connecticut household would pay \$950 more in taxes without the tax revenue generated by the tourism industry
- Casino gaming revenue supports vital state & local services
  - \$377.8 million (FY09) – contributions to state general fund
  - \$ 93.0 million (FY09) – grants to all municipalities statewide.

Tourism can help the state reduce the deficit and grow and retain jobs. It is one of the few areas of the state budget that generates revenue. Jobs created by tourism are good jobs, solid jobs, jobs that are both skilled and unskilled, held by people of all ages and are often the 2<sup>nd</sup> job in a Connecticut family's household, keeping that family whole and financially secure in tough times. Additionally, tourism jobs are home grown and cannot be moved out of state. The \$15 million investment will really put Connecticut back on the map, bring the positive focus on our state and secure the present and future of this industry.

Previous reductions in the Commission's budget have made the Commission more even creative in our attempts to do more with less. As the Commission's ability to provide financial support to arts, heritage, tourism and cultural organizations has decreased, the Commission has increased the technical assistance being offered to cultural organizations across the state, including through the Peer Advisor Network (PAN). The Peer Advisor Network provides flexible, short-term consulting service by trained, seasoned Connecticut professionals in a variety of organizational health, capacity and management issues. PAN has provided focused & effective technical assistance to over 130 organizations and emerging groups working in arts, heritage and humanities since fiscal year 2008. We are committed to continuing the work to support our constituent organizations understanding that the technical assistance and professional development are vital to our organizations and municipalities.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee today.