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Helen Higgins
Executive Director

February 15, 2012

Appropriations Committee Senator Toni Harp, co-chairman Representative Toni Walker, co-chairman

RE: Governor's Budget, Department of Economic and Community Development

Testimony of Helen Higgins, Executive Director, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

My name is Helen Higgins, and I am Executive Director of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. I regret that I cannot testify in person to you tonight but hope my written testimony will be persuasive.

I am testifying in opposition to the Governor's proposed zeroing out of so called "line items" in the Department of Economic and Community Development budget.

The Trust is Connecticut's non-profit statewide preservation organization, established by Special Act of the Connecticut General Assembly in 1975 (SA 93-75). It is committed to protecting and nourishing the vitality of significant buildings and landscapes through grants, loans, on-site technical preservation assistance, educational programs and publications.

According to the original 2012-13 budget, the Connecticut Trust would receive **\$210,396 annually from its legislatively directed line item** for historic preservation activities. As a statutory partner of the Office of Culture and Tourism, DECD, the Connecticut Trust uses these funds, and **an additional \$100,000 from the Connecticut Humanities Council**, to provide Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants (HPTAGs) to non-profits and municipalities around the state. Last year, 56 of these grants helped institutions plan for actual restoration and rehabilitation of their buildings. The State Historic Preservation Office offers "bricks and mortar" grants that further the aims of our planning grants. In addition, the Connecticut Trust uses its line item to provide Barns Grants, small grants to barn owners to help stabilize barns. Between the two granting programs last year, the **Trust leveraged with private funds 5 times the state's investment in this line item. Over a 100 short term project jobs resulted.** These are jobs for independent contractors like architects, restoration contractors, structural engineers and historic consultants. Legislatively directed investment in the Connecticut Trust has proven to have real impact on our communities, on small job growth and private investment.

We oppose "zeroing" out the Connecticut Trust and Connecticut Humanities Council's line items.