

The Arts Council

of Greater New Haven

70 Audubon St., 2nd Fl.
New Haven, CT 06510
t 203.772.2788
f 203.772.2262
e info@newhavenarts.org
i www.newhavenarts.org

TESTIMONY FOR APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT February 20, 2013

Good evening. My name is Cynthia Clair. I'm the executive director of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, a regional arts agency that serves 15 towns, over 120 cultural organizations and hundreds of individual artists. I am also president of the Connecticut Arts Alliance, a statewide arts advocacy organization.

I am here to address arts funding within the DECD budget, and ask that the arts grant line be restored to \$2 million and the arts and culture line items be sustained. At a time when the economy is your highest priority, you should uphold your investment in arts and culture, an investment with a positive return. This past year, Connecticut participated in a national study of the economic impact of the arts. The study reports that arts and culture is a **\$653 million industry**. Our industry supports over 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs, which generate \$462.5 million in household income to state residents. The state's non-profit arts and culture organizations, which spend \$455.5 million annually, leverage \$197.5 in additional spending. When our audiences attend our activities, they not only buy tickets to our performances and museums, they pump money into local restaurants, parking garages, and retail businesses.

Arts and culture organizations also create the events, the exhibits, performances, and festivals that bring visitors to our state. In the last couple of years, Connecticut has made a serious commitment to statewide marketing. But these will be wasted dollars, unless the state is invested in creating and maintaining strong arts and cultural assets. Without these assets Connecticut will have little to market.

In its new home in the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Office of the Arts has embarked on a new direction, recognizing the important role of the arts in making great places, creating community vibrancy and enhancing livability. The more vibrant and attractive our cities and towns, the more competitive Connecticut will be. Talented young

entrepreneurs seek creative environments in which to start companies and make their homes. They seek places that are distinctive and vital, communities that embrace new ideas.

The National Governor's Association acknowledges the importance of the arts, even suggesting that the arts can assist states in overcoming economic challenges. A May 2012 report, *New Engines of Growth: Five Roles for Arts, Culture and Design*, asserts that that, "governors are finding that the arts, culture and design can be important components of a comprehensive strategy for growth. They touch the economy at crucial leverage points, including innovation, entrepreneurship, employment, and revitalization. "

The arts define my community, the greater New Haven region. *We have Tony award* winning theaters, free world class art museums, and an international arts festival. The phenomenal new addition to the Yale Art Gallery opened in December garnering accolades in newspapers around the world. I can't recall another event that generated such positive and far reaching press attention for our community. In the coming months, New Haven will be home to a magnificent public art project, casting beams of colorful light across the harbor; and a mini-golf course designed by artists. Our cultural institutions present free Shakespeare in the park, tours of Broadway shows, exhibits by cultural icons and the opportunity to visit studios of emerging artists. They provide education in art, music and dance for all ages, programs for kids who are at risk, seniors, and Parkinson's patients. Collectively, these events and activities contribute to a creative energy and vitality that sets New Haven apart.

As the economy moves toward recovery, Connecticut is concerned about its competitiveness, our state's ability to attract new businesses and create new jobs. The arts are vital to our future, integral to creating vibrant communities that will entice businesses, talent and tourists. I urge you to preserve the state's small investment in arts and culture by restoring \$2 million in grant funds for the arts. Thank you.

Cynthia Clair
Executive Director