

To: State of Connecticut, Appropriations Committee

Date: February 20, 2013

Having lived in Connecticut for nearly 30 years and enjoyed and appreciated the state's beauty, diversity, history and charm, I strongly urge the Appropriations Committee to continue to support the present budget of \$15 million to the statewide effort in tourism and marketing. The revenue generated through tourism, which is derived from every sector of the State, is vital to this economy. Tourism is a REVENUE GENERATOR, not a cost to taxpayers.

While we understand that attendance at major visitor attractions has increased 6.68% just since the new FY12 campaign, the impact of this investment goes well beyond these attractions. In my world of higher education, quality student recruitment is critical to the future of all Connecticut's institutions of learning. The state image, availability of stable, educated and lively communities and institutions of higher education, contribute to our attractiveness, not just for students, families and visitors, but for business development. The coordinated effort, whether to bring regional and national sporting championships, or manufacturing or religious conventions to the state, all speak volumes about who we are and our ability to bond as an intellectual team.

I urge you to support the \$15 million statewide tourism marketing fund investment. It is a small price to pay for such significant and far reaching returns.

Patricia H. Meiser

Director of Athletics

Special Assistant to the President

University of Hartford