



CONNECTICUT  
PRESERVATION  
ACTION

Testimony by Anita Mielert  
**Raised Bill 5272, An Act Consolidating Certified Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax  
Credit**

Commerce Committee – February 27, 2014

Senator LeBeau, Rep. Perone, Sen. Frantz, Rep. Lavielle and the distinguished members of Commerce Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak today. I am Anita Mielert, former First Selectman of the Town of Simsbury, Immediate Past President of CT Preservation Action, and Advisor Emerita to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

I begin with a quote from then Governor-Elect Dannel Malloy's website:

*"Connecticut should do more to support applicants for federal funding and tax credits. It should expand the affordable housing bonus in its Historic Preservation Tax Credit program – a program that creates jobs and preserves our historical assets by encouraging rehabilitation of old buildings. . . . State tax credits to support affordable housing and rehabilitation of historic properties have been tightly limited. We can and must do better."*

Today we have a promise in progress thanks to the bipartisan efforts of the Commerce Committee. Our seven-year-old state historic rehabilitation tax credit history has been a complicated one, resulting in too many limitations, too many definitions, unintended consequences, and bureaucratic complications. Our serious attempts three years ago to simplify the bill were hampered at the time by administrative changeovers and other issues, which took priority. So it is very satisfying today to come before you to fully support the changes to the program, changes which will result in greater usage of a measure which will be even more beneficial to our state's recovery efforts than the historic versions have been.

The principal changes to the bill are meant to simplify its usage. 1) All the lists of previous building use have been removed. As under federal HRTC, the prior use of a certified historic building is really irrelevant. 2) Use of the building after rehabilitation has been limited only to distinguish it from the CT Historic Homes Tax Credit, to avoid double dipping. 3) Two different funding amounts and periods have been merged into one annual amount, without adding to the total of state funds utilized. 4) Rather than create a new standard for rehabilitation, as the previous measure referenced, the one referenced now is the federal Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This is an industry standard well known to developers.

Without going into a defense of the program itself (and we are happy to make the case), we will leave you with one thought. This is a stimulus program. The cumulative, 30-year, \$16.6 billion cost of the federal program has been more than offset by the \$21.1 billion generated in federal taxes by its projects. The historic rehab tax credit actually brings more money into the federal coffers than it costs; it makes money.

Again, thank you for raising this important legislation and affording me the opportunity to present this testimony. I would be glad to answer any questions.

Anita L. Mielert

[wolfried@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wolfried@sbcglobal.net)

(860) 658-1190 (860) 463-9466