February 25, 2015

State of Connecticut
Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

Dear State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee,

As Mayor of the City of Bridgeport, I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide.

The Discovery Museum and Planetarium has been an important, multi-faceted, and valued educational resource for students and the Bridgeport community for many years, with more than 80 ‘STEM’ programs, as well as numerous outreach projects which enhance the education of socioeconomically underserved children. Additionally, Discovery benefits visitors through engaging and educational exhibits, Planetarium shows, lectures, and a popular cultural heritage series that brings a large and diverse community together to celebrate and learn.

Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item, and not through competitive grants. The proposed elimination of this line item would be extremely damaging to valuable and important educational resource.

Sincerely,

Bill Finch
Mayor

"Together we are making Bridgeport the cleanest, greenest, safest, most affordable city, with schools and neighborhoods that improve each year"
Dear State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

I am writing to you as a 20 year Fairfield resident, an elementary school parent, and the Board of Education representative for the Stratfield PTA. The Discovery Museum and Planetarium has had a profound impact on me in all of those roles. I enjoyed programming at the museum as a single person, saw my children participate in enriching field trips, and last year I was part of the Discovery Museum’s STEM programs career day as a female role model in horticulture. In short, I consider The Discovery Museum one of the intellectual and community assets that make the Fairfield Bridgeport area such a stimulating place to live, work, and raise a family.

The Discovery Museum and Planetarium are unique in that their location and scale have provided an accessible, affordable, museum experience to all members of the surrounding community regardless of socio-economic circumstances for over 50 years. The Discovery Museum continues to challenge itself by developing insightful community programming and exhibits that educate us about the natural world and asks us to look at our place within it.

On behalf of the Stratfield PTA, I urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the vital work it does for many thousands of students statewide by providing an exciting door to the worlds of science and technology.

I know firsthand how difficult the decisions of budget making can be, but the education and enrichment of our children is literally our future, so I again respectfully urge you to
preserve the funding for The Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development. The Museum has helped develop a rich community for over fifty years and holds the keys to the continued development of our next generations of leaders in its innovative ongoing programming. Please support the Discovery Museum as the custodian of our future maintain its funding under the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Sincerely,

Melanie fox Carvallo
Stratfield PTA Board of Education Representative
Appropriations Committee
Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

To Whom it May Concern:

As a long-time resident of Bridgeport and supporter of the arts and science in my community, I know how important the Discovery Museum is to the greater Bridgeport community. The Discovery Museum is the collaborative partner to the Discovery Magnet School in Bridgeport, which is integral to science education for Bridgeport area students.

I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor's proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum's appropriation would negatively impact the Museum's ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide.

The Discovery Museum and Planetarium has been an important, multi-faceted, and valued regional resource for over 50 years, with more than 80 ‘STEM’ education programs for our region’s students, as well as numerous outreach projects which enhance the education of socioeconomically underserved children. With its focus on STEM, the Discovery Museum and Planetarium works to help our State meet the challenges of the achievement gap through working with educators to create and deliver learning experiences that are impactful, and that resonate with students long after they return to the classroom. Additionally, Discovery benefits visitors through engaging and educational exhibits, Planetarium shows, lectures, and a popular cultural heritage series that brings a large community together to celebrate and learn about diversity.
Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item, and not through competitive grants. The proposed elimination of this line item would be extremely damaging to valuable and important educational resource.

Very truly yours,

John F. Stafstrom, Jr.

JFS:cs
Appropriations Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700  
Hartford, CT 06106

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

As a faculty member at Sacred Heart University, I have worked closely with the Discovery Museum and Planetarium staff and seen the many unique benefits it provides to the wider community. I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide.

The Discovery Museum and Planetarium has been an important, multi-faceted, and valued regional resource for over 50 years, with more than 80 ‘STEM’ education programs for our region’s students, as well as numerous outreach projects which enhance the education of socioeconomically underserved children. With its focus on STEM, the Discovery Museum and Planetarium works to help our State meet the challenges of the achievement gap through working with educators to create and deliver learning experiences that are impactful, and that resonate with students long after they return to the classroom. Additionally, Discovery benefits visitors through engaging and educational exhibits, Planetarium shows, lectures, and a popular cultural heritage series that brings a large community together to celebrate and learn about diversity.

Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item, and not through competitive grants. The proposed elimination of this line item would be extremely damaging to valuable and important educational resource.

Sincerely,

_Velma Heller_

Velma E. Heller, Ed. D.  
Assistant Professor,  
Coordinator of Field Experiences  
heffey@sacredheart.edu
Appropriations Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700  
Hartford, CT 06106  

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development  
Subcommittee  

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium  

On behalf of the Isabelle Farrington College of Education at Sacred Heart University, I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide.  

In the past we have partnered with The Discovery Museum and Planetarium to develop several grant proposals. Several years ago we were finalists for a large NASA grant. The grant would have provided well over a million dollars in funding and would have also involved over twenty-five school districts from Norwalk to New London, including several priority school districts. Due to Federal Budget limitations the grant funding was withdrawn. Another grant, Take Flight: From the Wright Brothers to Tranquility Base - A Middle Level STEM Unit,” was cooperatively developed and submitted as part of the Teacher Quality Partnership Grant program. Take Flight: From the Wright Brothers to Tranquility Base - A Middle Level STEM Unit.” This grant highlighted claims that Gustave Whitehead, a Bridgeport native, made man’s first powered flight in Connecticut on August 14, 1901, well before the Wright Brothers. It also traced the unique role Connecticut has played in the development of manned flight. By utilizing the Discovery Museum contacts we were able to partner on this grant with Hamilton Sundstrand, as well as United Technologies. Unfortunately this grant proposal did not receive funding.  

Currently, the Discovery Museum provides more than 80 ‘STEM’ education programs for our region’s students, as well as numerous outreach projects that enhance the education of socioeconomically underserved children. With its focus on STEM, the Discovery Museum and Planetarium works to help our State meet the challenges of the achievement gap through working with educators to create and deliver learning experiences that are impactful, and that resonate with students long after they return to the classroom. Additionally, Discovery benefits visitors through engaging and educational exhibits, Planetarium shows, lectures, and a popular cultural heritage series that brings a large community together to celebrate and learn about diversity.  

Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item, and not through competitive grants. The proposed elimination of this line item would be extremely damaging to valuable and important educational resource.  

Sincerely,  

Paul W. Massey  
Assistant Professor  
Isabelle Farrington College of Education  
Sacred Heart University
February 26, 2015

Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building
Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee
   Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

I respectfully urge you to preserve the funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Converting funding for the Discovery Museum into a competitive disbursement through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget, will drastically impact the Discovery Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for thousands of students statewide.

The Discovery Museum and Planetarium has been an important, multi-faceted regional resource for over 50 years. With more than 80 educational programs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for our region’s students, the Discovery Museum and Planetarium helps our State meet the challenges of the achievement gap. The Discovery Museum works with educators to create and deliver learning experiences that resonate with students long after they return to the classroom.

I am hoping that you will acknowledge the value of the Discovery Museum and Planetarium to our State by preserving its appropriated funding as a line item. Elimination of this line item will be extremely damaging to this valuable, important educational resource.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Domyan
Member, MetroCrops, LLC
Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium – Critical To ‘STEM’ Education

I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide.

The USA is in critical need of boosting ‘STEM’ (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education. The Discovery Museum and Planetarium does exactly this for Connecticut’s children. It is something in which our State can take great pride.

The Discovery Museum and Planetarium has been an important, multi-faceted, and valued regional resource for over 50 years, with more than 80 ‘STEM’ education programs for our region’s students, as well as numerous outreach projects that enhance the education of socioeconomically underserved children. With its focus on STEM, the Discovery Museum and Planetarium works to help our State meet the challenges of the achievement gap through working with educators to create and deliver learning experiences that are impactful, and that resonate with students long after they return to the classroom. Additionally, Discovery benefits visitors through engaging and educational exhibits, Planetarium shows, lectures, and a popular cultural heritage series that brings a large community together to celebrate and learn about diversity.

As a 2013 CERC “Top Economic Project” winner, Outdoor Ventures’ two Connecticut Adventure Parks (Storrs & Bridgeport) simultaneously support our State’s leadership in environmental awareness, generate Connecticut jobs and drive tourism to our State. The Discovery Museum & Planetarium property is home to our Bridgeport Adventure Park.

Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item.

Sincerely,

Bahman Azarm
President
Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

On behalf of the Neighborhood Studios of Fairfield County, I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget.

I am very pleased to be writing this letter in support of the Discovery Museum and Planetarium, and its annual Black History Month Celebration. Every year, the Discovery Museum contributes to the furtherance of black historical education with its celebration of the various scientific and social contributions made by a wealth of African Americans, as well as, people of African descent. Including but not limited to, inventors, teachers, researchers, performers, writers, and the list could go on! They accomplish this wonderful feat by choosing programming that highlights the contributions made by the above-mentioned individuals, in fields ranging from science to the arts. This event is known and recognized annually throughout Bridgeport and its surrounding towns and cities, as a significant celebration of Black History.

Planetarium shows and interactive science demos, allow children to delve into the world of science in a more personal manner that is sure leave a lasting effect throughout their lifetime and also to encourage them to seek after careers, such as, educators, scientists and doctors.

The museum provides various learning opportunities to countless students throughout the state and severe cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would leave a negative effect, not only on the museum but also throughout the community at large.

Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item, and not through competitive grants. The proposed elimination of this line item would be extremely damaging to valuable and important educational resource.

Neighborhood Studios is proud to support The Discovery Museum and Planetarium and all of its educational endeavors within the community.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gable French Allen, Arts Academy Director
Neighborhood Studios of Fairfield County
391 East Washington Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06608
gfrench@nstudios.org
Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

As the Program Initiative Manager in STEM for Girl Scouts of Connecticut, I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide.

Thousands of Girl Scouts in Connecticut have benefited from the NASA curriculum that is thoughtfully delivered by the museum’s NASA-trained educators. The Discovery Museum is a valued partner that girls, leaders, and families count on to provide unique educational programming. Where else can a girl travel to the moon and Mars in a state-of-the-art facility on a mission to establish a permanent community in space while developing leadership, communication and problem-solving skills that prepare her for future STEM careers?

The Discovery Museum and Planetarium has been an important, multi-faceted, and valued regional resource for over 50 years, with more than 80 ‘STEM’ education programs for our region’s students, as well as numerous outreach projects which enhance the education of socioeconomically underserved children. With its focus on STEM, the Discovery Museum and Planetarium works to help our State meet the challenges of the achievement gap through working with educators to create and deliver learning experiences that are impactful, and that resonate with students long after they return to the classroom. Additionally, Discovery benefits visitors through engaging and educational exhibits,
Planetarium shows, lectures, and a popular cultural heritage series that brings a large community together to celebrate and learn about diversity.

Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item, and not through competitive grants. The proposed elimination of this line item would be extremely damaging to valuable and important educational resource.

Sincerely,

Ellyn Savard
Program Initiatives Manager
Girl Scouts of Connecticut
Appropriations Committee

Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

On behalf of Jack and Jill of America Inc., Bridgeport Chapter, I respectfully urge you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development, in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget. Drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide.

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Please join me in recognizing the value the Discovery Museum and Planetarium brings to our State by preserving its appropriated funding level as a line item, and not through competitive grants. The proposed elimination of this line item would be extremely damaging to valuable and important educational resource.

Sincerely,

Rosie Jones-Clarke
President
February 26, 2015

Adele Hodges
550 James Farm Road
Stratford, CT 06614

Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

To: State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee, Appropriations Conservation and Development Subcommittee

Re: The Discovery Museum and Planetarium

I am writing this letter on behalf of Discovery Museum and Planetarium in an effort to request that you to preserve funding for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium as a separate line item appropriation under the Department of Economic and Community Development. This will be in lieu of subjecting it to competitive disbursement through the proposed change through the Arts Commission, as presented under the Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget.

Any drastic cuts to the Discovery Museum and Planetarium’s appropriation would negatively impact the Museum’s ability to continue the work that it does to provide learning opportunities for many thousands of students statewide. Each year the Museum hosts several cultural and historical celebrations. These events, which are heavily attended by students as well as adults in the community, will also be at risk if funding is drastically cut.

Over the past three years I have had the opportunity to assist the staff as a volunteer on numerous projects, including their Black History, Flag Day, and Freedom Trail celebrations. I use to frequent the Museum during my school years and they have given me a great opportunity to reconnect. I am extremely impressed with their STEM educational program opportunities and their ability to reach out to students and adults throughout the State while remaining relevant and interesting.

I request that you will reconsider making any change in funding and funding line appropriation for the Discovery Museum and Planetarium. It is a tremendous asset to this community and the State.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Adele E. Hodges  
Colonel USMC (retired)