



Housatonic Heritage

March 2, 2015

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

We're deeply appreciative of support of regional tourism for the past several decades, and I request continued funding for the three regional tourism bureaus as created by the legislature (CGS 10-397). Regional tourism is important for countless local economies throughout the state, and has been a valuable partner to the National Heritage Area program as we enhance cultural tourism in Western CT.

The regional agencies have provided a local and diverse complement to the more overarching and general efforts of the central office. That partnership and its shared responsibilities should be maintained for the good of the whole state and its individual towns and various regions.

The budget that is currently being considered includes funding for state agency tourism marketing at \$10 million, but totally eliminates funding for the three regional bureaus. I believe that this is a shortsighted and damaging to one of CT's largest industries. I request that you consider reinstating funding for these highly effective, regional bureaus, as they have been (and continue to be) very productive organizations that have been directly responsive to the needs of your local and regional constituencies. Please find the \$1.5 million needed to sustain the three regional tourism agencies.

Regional tourism bureaus continue to be an excellent investment by the State, as they provide economic benefits and job creation in all corners of Connecticut. We've found our Bureau to be an outstanding partner in developing new tourism initiatives, and believe that continued funding for the bureaus provides a superb 'return on investment' for the people of CT.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Bolognani'.

Dan Bolognani
Executive Director



Upper Housatonic Valley
National Heritage Area