



**Testimony of Ginny Kozlowski, Executive Director of REX Development in support of the Regional Tourism District Funding and CT Tourism Marketing Funding to the Appropriations Committee  
March 2, 2015**

Dear Senator Bye and Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing in strong support of fully funding of state tourism marketing and the regional tourism districts.

Tourism is an export-oriented cluster in that goods and services are primarily sold to tourists from outside the region rather than residents. In addition, most sales and other taxes paid by tourists remain and help fund public services and infrastructure. In a sense, the tourism cluster is both benefited by, and provides benefits to, all other industry clusters. The arts and entertainment industries have made New Haven the "creative capital" of the State of Connecticut, building upon the abundant cultural diversities in the core urban city and utilizing the assets of the creative economy in the region. The percentage of businesses in the region that are "arts centric" is 4.49% compared to the national average of 2.52%. This creative industry has generated significant new employment opportunities and contributed directly to the economic growth of the region and the state.

Tourism has more than delivered on the State's investment in Tourism Marketing. After years of a \$1 marketing budget, the industry has increased jobs in the sector by 6,400 from December of 2013 to December of 2014. For the \$12 million investment in State Tourism Marketing, each job cost approximately \$1875 to create, before collecting the hotel occupancy, personal income and sales taxes generated by these jobs. How many investments deliver that kind of ROI?

The tourism sector is the only industry to recover all jobs lost during the recession and it is driving the economic recovery of Connecticut. I urge you to reconsider cutting tourism marketing funding to the Connecticut Office of Tourism and the Regional Tourism Districts.

Sincerely,

Ginny Kozlowski  
Executive Director