



March 1, 2015

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Having been an active businesswoman in the town of Kent since 1994, I am very concerned with the budget cuts that are currently being debated in Hartford. I refer to decisions to cut monies for regional tourism funding and the closing of the regional tourism offices. This would leave Connecticut as one of the few States in the Nation without a regional tourism district.

Because of its location and beauty, northwest Connecticut is a prime destination for tourists visiting the State as well Connecticut residents exploring more of their own State. The regional Tourism offices, including the Western Connecticut Convention and Tourism Board, provide an invaluable service to these prospective tourists through marketing and communication, which, in turn, keeps our businesses on solid ground and helps the small businessperson with promoting our towns.

In particular the Northwestern Tourism Board represents many small communities and towns similar to the town of Kent. Their efforts have a huge impact on tourism and visitors to the area. Every ice cream cone customer, every fishing guide trip participant, every hiker along the Appalachian Trail is a contributing member to the local economy. My businesses and all businesses depend on our local tourism office for outreach.

Here in Kent we have experienced the closing of many businesses through the impact of the recession and a sluggish economy. Cutting tourism dollars will surely add another unnecessary blow to our community, its residents and business owners.

Support us, the businesses that are the backbone of small towns like Kent, and reinstate the regional agencies.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Franco McAndrew
Backcountry Outfitters
Annie Bananie Ice Cream
Kent, CT