



April 21, 2015

To the Appropriations Committee
Senator Beth Bye, co-chair
Rep. Toni Walker

RE: HB 6825: An Act Making Deficiency Appropriations and Addressing the Deficit for the Current Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015.

My name is Helen Higgins and I serve as the executive director of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. The Connecticut Trust, a 501c3 non-profit chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1975 serves as a statutory partner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, State Historic Preservation Office.

In Section 5 of this bill, the Governor proposes to divert \$15.2 million in Community Investment Act (CIA) funds to address the budget deficit for the current fiscal year. This raid is **in addition** to the complete sweep of funds proposed for the FY 16 and 17 biennial budget - providing a series of devastating blows to this account.

Specifically, the bill proposes to sweep \$5.1 million from the State Historic Preservation Office account.

Three issues:

- **The Community Investment Act is a dedicated fund. It is not part of the budget. It should not be raided, either in this sweep or in the proposed 18 month sweep of all CIA directed funds collected from town halls across the state from recording fees.**
 - The collected revenue supports critical anti-sprawl, quality of life programs in four agencies: DECD, State Historic Preservation Office, DEEP, Open Space protection, Department of Agriculture, a number of farm related programs; and Department of Housing for numerous initiatives involving technical support for affordable housing...
- **For the State Historic Preservation Office this sweep constitutes an 89% reduction in existing CIA funds. The office has these funds in hand and has explicit programs and projects for which they are intended.**
 - The sweep cuts 62% of its granting programs; all granting programs at SHPO have been halted.
 - The sweep cuts 79% of administrative costs, including almost \$100,000 in salaries.
 - The sweep, most critically, cuts 93% of funds earmarked for repair of the four State Historic Museums, including Newgate Prison. Newgate, one of the state's most popular museums, is closed. There are major repairs needed especially to the stone retaining walls, which are in danger of collapse. With these sweeps, both the Deficiency sweep and then the total CIA sweep, Newgate may never be able to open again.
- **Community Investment Act funds constitute 85% of all historic preservation programming in Connecticut. The rest comes from federal matching funds from the National Park Service. Sweeping these state funds is catastrophic for historic preservation activity in Connecticut.**

Please do not support the \$15.2 million diversion of Community Investment Act funds, nor the complete 18 month sweep proposed for the 2016-17 budget..