

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT CULTURAL COALITION

February 4, 2015

State Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr., State Representative James Albis, and members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the board of directors of the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition, I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 345, "An act concerning the water taxi at the Heritage Park in the Towns of Groton and New London." The Coalition heartily endorses the funding of a water taxi service between Groton and New London.

The mission of the Coalition is to foster region-wide economic growth in New London County by optimizing existing and new arts, cultural, and heritage activities to assure that cultural sector and creative business assets are central to the vitality of the region.

The Heritage Park and a water taxi service exemplify that mission and its impact.

The Heritage Park project will unite and strengthen current and planned arts, heritage, cultural, business, and community activities along the Thames River to establish a beckoning destination for residents and visitors. The water taxi's dynamic linkage of the Groton and the New London sides of the river would leverage and compound independently strong sources of business activity in our region as well as create a new engine driving visitor and patron enhanced experiences.

Combined with the potential of the Heritage Park to employ coordinated marketing and maximize cross-river connected and collaborative events, the water taxi has the potential not only to capitalize on New London harbor's assets but also to strengthen their vitality and viability.

Committed to fostering synergy, advancing our regional identity, and attracting and retaining businesses, residents, and visitors, the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition enthusiastically supports the establishment of a water taxi connecting the Heritage Park sites in Groton and New London. Moreover, with ground broken for the National Coast Guard Museum in downtown New London, the Heritage Park and a water taxi could not be more timely, appropriate, or important.

The Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition urges the funding of a water taxi service between Groton and New London and thanks you again for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



Wendy Bury
Executive Director