

The Honorable Anthony Guglielmo

Connecticut State Senator
Legislative Office Building
210 Capitol Avenue, Room 3400
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Michael Alberts

Connecticut State Representative
Legislative Office Building
210 Capitol Avenue, Room 4200
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The Honorable Daniel Rovero

Connecticut State Representative
Legislative Office Building
210 Capitol Avenue, Room 4004
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

March 8, 2015

Testimony regarding elimination of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's line item in the Department of Economic and Community Development budget.

I am a resident of Woodstock and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

Thank you for funding the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's re-granting program that appears as a line item under the DECD budget. The Connecticut Trust, chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1975 – this is our 40th year – serves as a statutory partner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, State Historic Preservation Office.

In the past two years the Trust's Maintenance and Repair grants, funded at just under \$200,000 annually, have supported grants at 29 historic places listed on the State and/or National Register of Historic Places. Each grant requires a complete cash match so this state fund leverages another \$200,000 each year.

Sounds like small potatoes – but the total cash leverage has been \$800,000 for two years. 88 short term jobs for contractors, masons, painters, carpenters, roofers, architects, engineers, window restoration experts, plasters, and architectural and environmental consultants have been provided by these two years of grants. The grants are not large– up to \$15,000 per grant. But to the organizations, communities, churches and synagogues – many of which are manned by volunteers – the grants are lifelines and they are transformational.

Your constituents are our constituents – the Connecticut Trust line item serves the people of Connecticut. Its funds go right back into communities across the state. I draw your attention to our map of Maintenance and Repair grants given in the last two years.

The Connecticut Trust needs to continue to do this kind of investment – no one else fulfills this role of giving access to a small amounts of capital money to hundreds of small historic places. This is an unprecedented approach to maintaining and preserving a web of historic places that communities cherish. The Maintenance and Repair grants reward initiative, hope and hard work. A small achievement of fixing a roof or stabilizing a steeple can encourage even more. We often get repeat grant requests.

The Connecticut Trust line item functions as a competitive granting program for historical entities across the state. Funds are not operating funds. The funds stabilize historic places, restore them, and ultimately return to communities preserved historic sites that provoke community pride. The mechanism for awarding grants from the Connecticut Trust has been in place for 12 years. The granting program works, it has impact in our communities, and it is wildly popular. Right now we have a pipeline of over \$300,000 in excellent quality requests for these funds; these projects will be left unfunded with the elimination of the line item for the Trust's Maintenance and Repair grants.

This past year the East Woodstock Congregational Church, built in 1834, had applied for and received a Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant to determine the nature of damage to its monumental columns and a strategy for their conservation and restoration. The Church Society plans to apply for a Maintenance and Repair Grant in the coming year to repair the columns and continue their responsible stewardship of this important and very visible local landmark and anchor of the community of East Woodstock.

I urge you to consider mechanisms, including restoring the line item, that would allow this grant program to continue its good work.

Thank you,

Myron O. Stachiw

Trustee

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

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