



545 Long Wharf Drive, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor | New Haven, CT 06511  
TEL: 860-635-5600 | FAX: 203-785-9900 | [www.ctlodging.org](http://www.ctlodging.org)



**Testimony of Victor Antico Jr., President of the Connecticut Lodging Association  
in support of Regional Tourism District Funding and DECD/Tourism Statewide Marketing  
Funding to the Appropriations Committee - February 10, 2016**

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

The Connecticut Lodging Association (CLA) strongly supports continued funding of statewide tourism marketing. CLA is concerned with Governor Malloy's midterm budget proposal including the restructuring of funding control from Legislation to the Commissioner's office.

The industry has suffered greatly after the recession due to the limiting of tourism marketing regionally and statewide. The State's marketing efforts launched in May 2012, still need additional time and resources to have a significant impact on potential travelers. **The key to marketing success is repetition of the message.** Consumers, who are still conservative with regard to discretionary spending, are being inundated with tourism advertisements from across the country and the world. Without continued significant investment in tourism marketing, Connecticut will, once again, fall off the map.

With a 15% occupancy tax, the **lodging industry financially supports many of the State's programs beyond tourism marketing.** In FY 2014-15, occupancy tax generated more than \$116 million for the State's coffers, and in FY 2013-14 generated over \$105 million. Continued marketing would significantly increase that contribution year over year. Tourism is an essential economic driver and revenue stream, for the well-being of Connecticut.

- Travel and tourism activities account for over \$11.5 billion in Connecticut economic activity each year.
- As of December 2014, Connecticut's Leisure and Hospitality Sector accounted for 157,000 jobs, an increase of 11,508 jobs in 2013.
- Numerous state, regional and national studies show continued funding is essential to sustain the culture and tourism economy. Every dollar invested returns 7 times in direct tax revenue
- The Regional Tourism Districts are essential to promoting small businesses within the tourism industry. Small businesses in CT are suffering and need organizations such as these for promotion against large online marketing companies.

Continued marketing is the only way Connecticut will be competitive in an industry where there is intense competition. We urge you to continue funding for the **\$9.5 million investment in State Tourism Marketing** as well as sustain the **Regional Tourism Districts** so we can continue to maximize the economic impact of travel and tourism in Connecticut.

Victor Antico Jr.

President, Connecticut Lodging Association, 545 Long Wharf Drive, New Haven, CT 06511  
Owner, Holiday Inn Express, 346 Kelly Road, Vernon, CT 06066