

Legislative Committee

March 15, 2016

Commerce Committee
State Capitol Building, Room 110
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Members of the Commerce Committee:

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic business organization with over 2,175 members that employ over 50,000 people in and around our service area. Our chamber represents businesses from all industry sectors and of all sizes, from Fortune 500 companies, to micro businesses.

The purpose of this letter today is to express the chamber's support for HB 5576- AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE-WIDE MARKETING AND PROMOTION ACCOUNT AND THE APPLICATION OF A FLAT-RATE OCCUPANCY TAX TO BED AND BREAKFASTS.

The Middlesex Chamber has always recognized the importance of tourism as a strong economic driver in Middlesex County and in the surrounding areas. In our 2016 Public Policy Agenda, and in previous versions, we have asked the General Assembly to pursue policies that encourage and promote tourism in the State of Connecticut.

Middlesex County is home to some of the state's best tourism attractions including Essex Steam Train and Riverboat, Goodspeed Opera House, Gillette Castle, Lyman Orchards, Powder Ridge Mountain Park and Resort, and Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park. Many tourists from other parts of Connecticut and beyond also visit Middlesex County to participate in Wesleyan University's events and activities, and to experience the Connecticut River and the beautiful shoreline in our region.

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce supports dedicated tourism marketing funding that will maximize the economic impact of travel and tourism in our state, and we support HB 5576.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important topic.