Appropriations Committee, Conservation & Development Subcommittee: Public Hearing
Wednesday, February 27, 2019

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Cassano, Representative Formica, Senator Lavielle, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, a nonprofit service organization working to amplify, empower, and unite artists, creative organizations, and audiences for our region, which produces $135 million in direct economic activity, supports 5,600 full time equivalent jobs, and attracts 700,000 attendees annually.¹ I am also the co-chair of the Policy and Issues Committee of the Connecticut Arts Alliance and a member of the Lamont-Bysiewicz Arts, Culture, and Tourism Policy Committee.

Thank you for your consistent support for the creative sector, particularly creating the Tourism Fund (PA 17-2) last year. However, the overall investment you have been provided to appropriate has decreased 60% since 2009. This steady decline has left Connecticut’s artists and cultural constrained to reach new audiences, expand their programs, or secure private funding. Last year, Connecticut only invested $1.46 per resident compared with $2.34 in Massachusetts and $2.99 in Rhode Island.² The statewide per capita amount matters particularly for Connecticut because we do not have regional or local municipal investment.

I also thank the Governor for maintaining current funding levels for arts and culture in his budget, which will prevent further negative consequences. However, with a $7 to $1 return on investment, a greater investment is imperative to maximize our community and economic impact.
The recommended adjustments to the Tourism Fund from the Lamont-Bysiewicz Arts, Culture, and Tourism Policy Committee provide a clear and strategic path forward:

- **Adjust the portion of lodging tax revenue deposited from 10% to 25%,** placing Connecticut proudly in the lead among our neighboring states for arts and tourism with just 0.17% invested from our overall state budget
- **Dedicate 40% to arts and culture and 60% to tourism,** mirroring the current allocations

**Recommendations (continued):**

- **Appropriate 100% of the available dollars** annually to support arts, culture, and tourism
- Change the names of the “Tourism Fund” itself and the “Statewide Marketing” line to “Arts, Culture, and Tourism Fund” and “Statewide Tourism Marketing,” respectively, reflecting how these resources are used

This structure has been adopted by my organization, CT Arts Alliance, CT Tourism Coalition, CT Humanities, CT Restaurant Association, CT Marine Trades Association, and Nonprofit Alliance. The alignment proves that the creative sector is a “shovel ready” solution for many problems facing Connecticut. Adopting these recommendations will immediately generate jobs and spur economic activity; attract businesses, visitors, and families to CT; and create a positive ripple effect in our neighborhoods, towns, and cities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. I can be reached with any questions at Daniel@NewHavenArts.org or at 203-772-2788.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fitzmaurice

*Executive Director*
1 Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations and Their Audiences in the Greater New Haven Area, Americans for the Arts (2017)

2 State Arts Agency Revenues, Fiscal Year 2019, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (February 2019)