

Testimony Supporting Bill 131 for A Connecticut Industry Trail

As the Director of the New Britain Industrial Museum, I engage daily with visitors from near and far. They visit because they have an interest in (or connection to) New Britain, once worked for a major manufacturing firm in Connecticut, or collect tools. Although the New Britain Industrial Museum is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, most remark that they are shocked; they never knew we were here.

Unfortunately, the New Britain Industrial Museum is not alone in this. Small organizations struggle to maintain and grow their presence within their communities, despite the place-making stories their collections tell. I am not aware of a single town in the state that does not have a museum or historical society. Although buoyed by generous individual donors, members, and volunteers, resources are difficult for us all to come by.

Connecticut's industrial history involves every town in the state. Others have detailed Connecticut's major inventions, innovations, and industries in their written testimony. They have likely made it clear there is significant cause to develop a Connecticut Industry Trail.

I wish to make some of the potential benefits for museums like mine clear. Linking my museum with other industry-oriented museums would undoubtedly increase our visitation and make it easier to partner with similar organizations for events, educational programs, or exhibits.

If proper resources are allocated to such a project, a Connecticut Industry Trail would provide the connections organizations like mine need to thrive. We need a trail that can help meet our needs. After all, writing and installing site markers only accomplishes so much.

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