



Appropriations Committee: Conservation & Development Subcommittee

Public Hearing | Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative DiMassa, Representative Horn, 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 organizations constrained to reach new audiences, expand their programs, or secure private funding. Last year, Connecticut only invested \$1.46 per resident compared with \$2.63 in Massachusetts and \$1.97 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, greater support is imperative to maximize our community and economic impact. My recommendations are in alignment with the CT Arts Alliance's statewide policy platform:

- Dedicate and codify that the Tourism Fund invests 40% to Arts + Culture and 60% to Tourism
- Change the name of this fund from "Tourism Fund" to "Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund"
- Allocate 25% of existing Lodging Tax revenue into the Tourism Fund (compared to current allocation of 10%)
- Ensure that all excess revenue in the Tourism Fund is appropriated annually and shared equally among all line items; do not add new line items

Recommendations (continued)

- Allocate additional new dedicated revenue sources into the Tourism Fund; do not increase the Lodging Tax rate

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 2020, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (February 2019)