

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT CULTURAL COALITION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nancy Bulkeley
Dominion Energy
Chair

Keith Turner
Homestead Funding
Vice Chair

Wes Pulver
Nat'l Coast Guard Museum Assoc.
Treasurer

Dan McMahon
Goodspeed Musicals
Secretary

Caleb Bailey
Eastern CT Symphony Orchestra

Carrie Dyer
Reliance Health, Inc.

Jose Garaycochea-Ulloa
Expresiones Cultural Center

Eric Garofano
Conway, Londregan, Sheehan,
& Monaco, P.C.

Kolton Harris
Writer's Block Ink

Andrea Marcille
U.S. Coast Guard Academy
Alumni Assoc.

Nishant Sahoo
Devoe/Sahoo Group–Merrill Lynch

Chandler Smith
Eugene O'Neill Theater Center

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Lisa McGinley
The Day (retired)

Julie Menders
Otis Library

Robert Mills
Norwich Community Dev. Corp.

Robert T. Ross
CT Office of Military Affairs

Robert Richter
Connecticut College

Steve Sigel
Garde Arts Center

Steve White
Mystic Seaport Museum

Christopher Zendan

STAFF

Wendy Bury
Executive Director

Deb Mathiasen
Assistant Director

March 3, 2020

TO: Appropriations Committee

RE: H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021
Department of Economic and Community Development

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the 500+ arts and cultural organizations, businesses and individuals we represent, the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition wishes to express our support for H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021. We thank the Governor for maintaining current funding levels for arts and culture, although the appropriation has experienced a 60% decline since 2009.

In Connecticut, arts and culture:

- Represent 5% of CT's economy
- Generate \$9 billion annually
- Supports 57,000 jobs
- Has a \$7 to \$1 return on investment to the state's economy

In Southeastern CT (New London County), arts and culture:

- Generates \$168 million annually, supports 4,460 (FTE) jobs and attracts 3.2 million attendees annually
- Improves quality of life and contributes to Southeastern CT's economy
- Creates vibrant rural and urban communities
- Helps to attract and retain residents, employers and employees
- Is a cornerstone to the tourism industry

Our small corner of the state packs an enormous economic punch, and represents 1/5 of CT's total nonprofit arts and cultural economic activity.

Beyond their economic impact, arts and culture are a major contributor to CT's quality of life and central to the decision-making process for businesses, workers and families looking for a home here. Arts and culture build state pride and our identity stems from our history, heritage and modern arts and cultural assets. From our Native American origins to our military history and maritime heritage, award winning performing arts centers, museums and some of the best artists in the nation, CT should leverage these assets every day. More important, these are revenue generators, not cost centers.

Our recommendations are in alignment with those of the CT Arts Alliance:

- Dedicate and codify 40% to Arts + Culture and 60% to Tourism in the Tourism Fund
- Change the name from Tourism Fund to Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund
- Allocate 25% of existing Lodging Tax into the Tourism Fund (compared to current allocation of 10%) without increasing lodging tax rate

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT CULTURAL COALITION

- Ensure that any excess revenue in the Tourism Fund is appropriated annually and shared equally among all line items, which includes "Arts Commission" (Office of the Arts), "Statewide Tourism Marketing" (Office of Tourism), CT Humanities, and direct line items to arts, cultural and tourism entities and consortiums; do not add new line items
- Ensure the Administration and legislators consult with CT Arts Alliance and CT Tourism Coalition for decisions that impact the arts, cultural, and tourism industries
- Encourage the Tourism Fund, as a whole, to have additional and new dedicated revenue sources without increasing the Lodging Tax rate

Thank you for consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,



Wendy Bury
Executive Director