

To: Appropriations Committee; Subcommittee – Conservation & Development
From: Amy Wynn, Executive Director, American Mural Project & President, CT Arts Alliance
Date: February 10, 2020
Re: Testimony concerning DECD State Agency Budget & CT Tourism Fund, February 11 Hearing

Co-Chairs and members of the Committee,

As someone who has worked in the nonprofit arts and culture sector in Connecticut for almost 20 years now, and currently leading the American Mural Project, I am inspired every day by what the impact the arts have on individuals and communities. I see jobs, young people being trained for future jobs, I see creative expression inspiring, healing, educating and connecting people in ways they might never experience otherwise. Additionally, our state's arts and creative industry is one of the best returns on investment we can have for our citizens. With that in mind, I urge you to consider and act on the following:

- Within the CT Tourism Fund: Dedicate and codify 40% to Arts + Culture and 60% to Tourism.
This straightforward action is important for efficient functionality and clear understanding.
- Change the name from Tourism Fund to Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund
You as Legislators deserve to have these items clearly and accurately labeled to allow clear understanding and identification among the numerous items you deal with.
- Allocate 25% of existing Lodging Tax into the Tourism Fund (compared to current allocation of 10%)
Arts and Tourism statistics prove that these sectors have a healthy, dependable ROI and, given proper investment, can play a larger role in supporting Connecticut's economy.
- 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
This is a fair approach to insure efficient functionality and clear understanding as we stabilize our state's economy.
- Ensure the Administration and legislators consult with CT Arts Alliance and CT Tourism Coalition for decisions that impact the arts, cultural, and tourism industries
We have a wealth of knowledge and on-the-ground experience to share, and are experienced in collaborating with different sectors on a variety of challenges.
- Encourage the Tourism Fund, as a whole, to have additional and new dedicated revenue sources without increasing the Lodging Tax rate
- Amend draft bill, *An Act Concerning Jobs in and Revenue from the Gaming Industry* p. 13, line 390

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- **Current language:** Ten per cent of the gross gaming revenue from the operation of authorized games, except video facsimile games, which shall be deposited in the state-wide tourism marketing account, established pursuant to section 10-395a of the general statutes

- **Recommended language:** Ten per cent of the gross gaming revenue from the operation of authorized games, except video facsimile games, which shall be deposited in the Tourism Fund, established pursuant to section 10-395b of the general statutes

We recognize the enormity of identifying solutions to the State's financial challenges and thank you for all that you do.