



The Valley Railroad Company
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Statement IN SUPPORT of HB 6119

The Valley Railroad Co d/b/a Essex Steam Train & Riverboat has been an established tourist destination for fifty years, since 1971. As a part of the tourism industry, this company entertains more than 190,000 guests annually, and makes a substantial economic contribution to the communities it serves and to the state.

Employing some 450 people, both full time and part time, the company has many full time employees with significant expertise in our industry, to maintain and repair 100 year old steam locomotives and coaches. Beyond that, we employ all types of individuals, ranging from high to senior citizens; from high school elf's in our North Pole Express, to chef's on our Dinner Train, marketing specialists, riverboat captains, Steam Locomotive engineers, firemen, and conductors. These are all very talented and specialized vocations.

In past years, When The State of Connecticut failed to adequately market Statewide Tourism, the Essex Steam Train was able to "step up to the plate" and more than double its own marketing, going from some \$400,000 per year to more than \$850,000 in order to maintain its brand. With the Pandemic and resulting economic conditions surrounding tourism and hospitality, the company is unable to sustain this business practice.

Tourism and hospitality MUST have State Tourism support in order for the industry to revive itself. Each \$1 invested by the State in tourism marketing will yield from \$3-\$7 return in revenue in the same fiscal year. This has been proven time and again in other states, and evidenced by the more than \$75 million in tourism marketing in states surrounding Connecticut: New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Dodd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin Dodd,
President & CEO