



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the
Commerce Committee
February 11, 2021**

RE: HB-6119 - AN ACT CONCERNING ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM FUNDING

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) supports **HB-6119**, which will generate additional funding to support the arts, culture, and tourism sector in Connecticut.

Tourism is Connecticut's 8th largest industry, supporting more than 80,000 jobs directly related to tourism and more than 120,000 jobs supported by tourism activities. According to the state's Office of Tourism, "interesting small towns" is one of the things potential travelers to New England are searching for. And, as many residents and travelers know, Connecticut has a rich array of small towns and cities.

Promoting tourism also generates significant tax revenue and spending in local businesses, strengthening our state and local economies.

HB-6119 will position Connecticut to better promote the arts, culture, and tourism sector in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

COST is an advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process.