



Mystic Country

February 18, 2021

Senator Catherine Osten & Representative Toni Walker  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Osten & Representative Walker,

I write as chair of the board of the Eastern Regional Tourism District to request an additional \$100,000 be added to the \$400,000 that the District currently receives annually. The purpose of these additional funds is to expand the very successful matching grant program initiated by the District this past year. I am pleased to report that the newly appointed District Board has had a successful year of redevelopment and regrowth in 2020. We elected new leadership, appointed new municipal representatives to the board, contracted with the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut and Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce as our Administrative Partner, and launched a new regional marketing matching grant program to leverage state funds.

The Regional Marketing Partnership Program was a great success. The program, a public / private partnership, was designed to leverage state dollars to promote the region's tourism venues. The District matched private funds on a 2:1 basis for the first \$5,000 and 1:1 thereafter up to \$25,000. This allowed venues, municipalities, and nonprofits to partner together on campaigns that benefitted the entire region. Through this program 11 projects were funded and \$155,000 of private funds were leveraged. This public-private partnership allowed the state to almost double their marketing impact for the region.

It is our belief that, because of the success of the eastern region's matching grant program, additional funding in the amount \$100,000 earmarked for matching grant purposes only, will effectively engage the private sector in marketing their there region and venues, substantially leveraging our meager advertising funds, and will benefit the tourism industry across the state. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Bellano".

James Bellano  
Chair  
Eastern Regional Tourism District

Eastern Regional Tourism District  
% Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut  
914 Hartford Tpke, Suite 206  
Waterford, CT 06385