

February 18, 2021

Rep. Toni E. Walker, Co-Chair
Sen. Catherine A. Osten, Co-Chair
Appropriations Committee
Connecticut State Legislature
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget for Conservation & Development Agencies

Dear Chairs Walker and Osten:

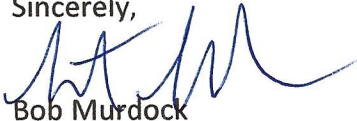
The Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau is Connecticut's only statewide meetings and sports event sales and marketing organization. Our mission is to sell and market the state of Connecticut as a premier destination for national, regional, and statewide group business, conventions, and sporting events. We work harmoniously with other organizations involved in marketing and promoting Connecticut, enabling the State and its immediate environment to become a regional, family-oriented, arts, cultural, educational, sports and entertainment meeting destination that creates new jobs and broadens the tourism effort. Part of our funding comes from the Department of Community and Economic Development's budget, via the Office of Tourism, and we also have private sector partners.

To strengthen the arts, culture, and tourism sector in Connecticut, additional resources need to be directed to the Tourism Fund, an element of the DECD budget. The tourism and hospitality industries are net revenue generators for the State. This funding does not compete with other priority programs but instead helps pay for them.

Businesses across the state have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The travel and tourism industry has been disproportionately impacted, and the pandemic's impacts threaten the viability of our state's destinations, landmarks, meeting and event venues, attractions, hotels, and restaurants. Additional funding for DECD and the passage of House Bill 6119 are important to the financial recovery of the hospitality and tourism sectors.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Bob Murdock
President, Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau