

February 18, 2021

Dear Appropriations Committee,

As a member of the arts community in Connecticut, I am submitting this testimony in support of Governor Lamont's proposed budget, particularly in support of replenishing the Tourism Fund to pre-pandemic levels using resources from the General Fund in order to maintain flat funding for the sector. I am an artist as well as an arts administrator serving as the Director of Community Impact at the Greater Hartford Arts Council and a commissioner for the Commission on Cultural Affairs for the City of Hartford.

Additionally, the arts, culture, and tourism sector ask the appropriations committee to diversify and increase the funding of the Tourism Fund by allocating portions of proceeds from other state taxes and/or portions of new revenue streams into the Tourism Fund. This will stabilize funding for the sector and protect the sector against another event that severely impacts the hotel and hospitality industry.

Funding for arts, culture and tourism is necessary. On a daily basis I see the impact the arts have on the lives of people in Connecticut, specifically in the Greater Hartford region. I led a call this morning with over 20 representatives from small and mid-size arts organizations in the Greater Hartford region who are doing everything they can to keep their doors open and continue to do the important work they do for the people of Connecticut and beyond. Some mentioned the high demand for art classes and the need for waitlists. Many spoke about their optimism for people reengaging with their work post-pandemic and others mentioned that the money is close to running out for their organization.

The arts are an economic driver. The sector provides around 59,000 jobs, including my own. As an arts administrator, I see the organizations and individual artists in our state struggling with the uncertainty of their futures. The pandemic has devastated the arts ecosystem. The ripple effect leaches beyond the sector itself. When residents and visitors attend a performance or visit a museum, they are contributing to the economy beyond the performing arts venues, historic homes, and museums.

The arts also have a unique way of providing a platform for individuals to express themselves in ways no other medium can. The arts heal and unite like nothing else. Studies have shown the measureable

impact to the arts on our physical and mental health. When the arts thrive, community thrives and vice versa.

Funding for the arts and culture sector was insufficient before the pandemic. Failing to take action to increasing revenue to the Tourism Fund will put more than the arts sector into deeper peril.

I ask members of the Appropriations Committee to consider how the arts are woven into your daily lives and that you support the replenishment of the Tourism Fund. This is a critical step towards recovery for the sector and the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Roy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Amanda Roy
Bloomfield, Connecticut