

April 28, 2009

To: Senator Gayle Slossberg, co-chairman
Representative James Spallone, co-chairman
Members of the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes

My name is Helen Higgins and I serve as executive director of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, founded in 1975 by Special Act of the Connecticut General Assembly (SA-93-75).

I am testifying in opposition to the merger of the Commission on Culture and Tourism into the Department of Economic and Community Development. One of the four divisions of the CCT is the federally mandated State Historic Preservation Office.

I want to focus my comments in two areas:

- 1- On the very negative impact such a merger will have on the state's ability to facilitate the influx of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.
- 2- On the potential for loss of federal funds that come to the state to support the State Historic Preservation Office, more than a million dollars. 6 federally funded staff will be eliminated in the merger.

Point One:

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviews all federally funded and licensed projects for their effects on historic buildings, historic districts, and archaeological sites as part of the environmental-impact analysis for the projects. Staff members are specifically certified for this work. Under federal law, no federally supported project in Connecticut can proceed without the review of the SHPO. (the federal National Historic Preservation Act of 1966)

Under federal law, all stimulus dollars directed at construction projects will require SHPO review. This law was recently reaffirmed in the light of the ARRA. The work load for SHPO project review, currently at approximately 1500 reviews a year, has already begun to increase and can be expected to increase dramatically in the near future as federal stimulus funds for construction come into CT. In fact, more staff not fewer, is really needed to fulfill the requirements on the use of federal stimulus money.

Transportation projects, housing projects and even the newly-charged Colt rehabilitation project, the most major historic preservation project in this state, will stall in their tracks with no SHPO or only a skeletal staff. In order for Connecticut to use stimulus funds expeditiously or at all, the state needs to maintain or even increase its ability to conduct



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Helen Higgins
Executive Director

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation is Connecticut's non-profit statewide preservation organization, established by Special Act of the Connecticut General Assembly in 1975 (SA 93-75). It is committed to protecting and nourishing the vitality of significant buildings and landscapes through grants, loans, on-site technical preservation assistance, educational programs and publications.

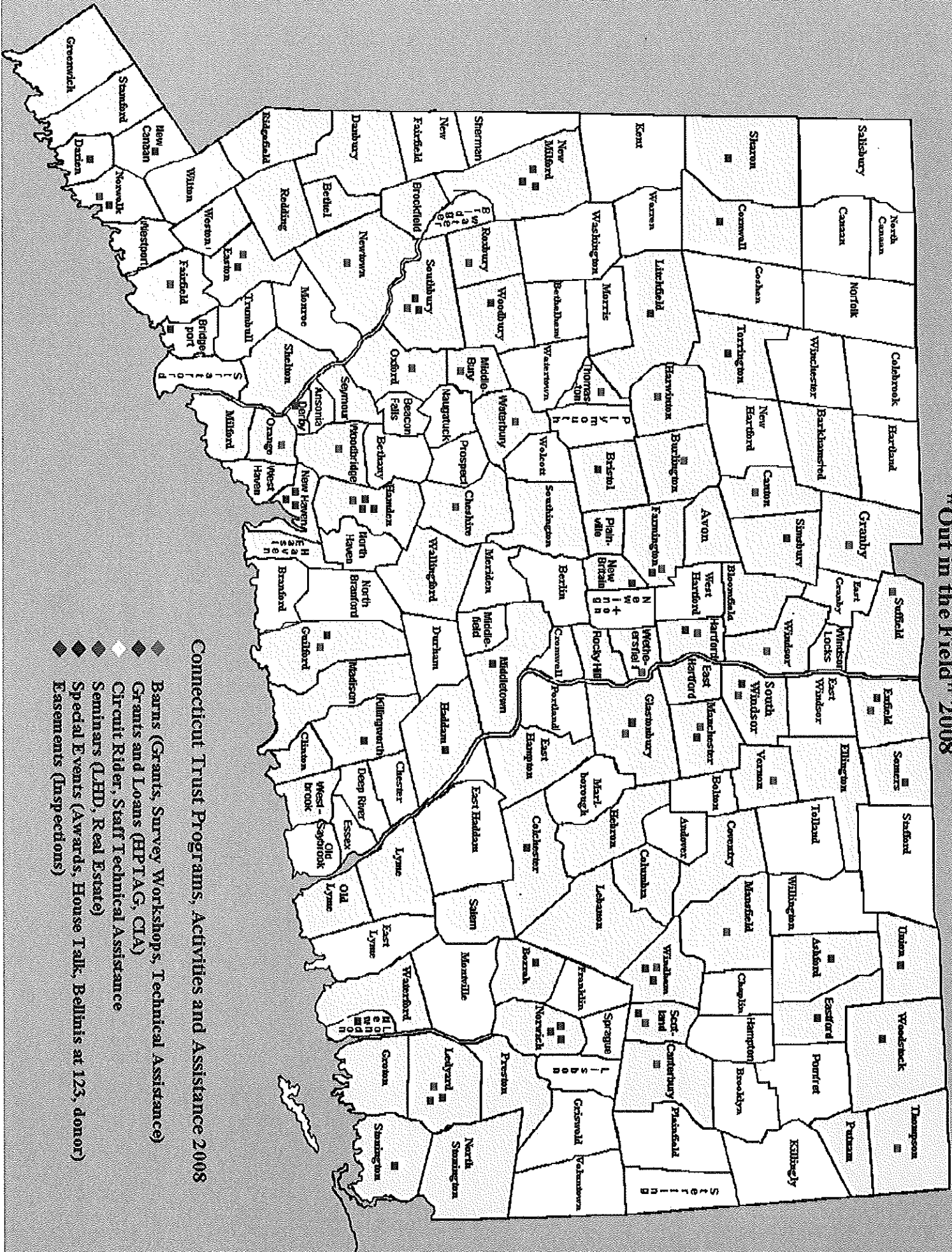
The Connecticut Trust is a Statewide Partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a Statutory Partner of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism.

Through its Circuit Rider Program, a partnership with the National Trust, the Connecticut Trust awards Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants, Historic Building Financing Fund loans and Barns Grants across the state. Funding for these grants comes from the Connecticut General Assembly.

Below is a complete list of current Trustees and members of the Advisory Council.

The Connecticut Trust has three web sites: www.cttrust.org; www.connecticutbarns.org; www.towngreens.com. The Trust publishes the news magazine *Connecticut Preservation News* bi-monthly.

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation "Out in the Field" 2008



Connecticut Trust Programs, Activities and Assistance 2008

- ◆ Barns (Grants, Survey Workshops, Technical Assistance)
- ◆ Grants and Loans (EPITAG, CIA)
- ◆ Circuit Rider, Staff Technical Assistance
- ◆ Seminars (LHD, Real Estate)
- ◆ Special Events (Awards, House Talk, Bellinis at 125, donor)
- ◆ Easements (Inspections)