

27 April 2009

Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes

Dear Commission Members:

I strongly urge you to help prevent Governor Rell from folding the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) into the office of Economic and Community Development (DECD). The reasons are quite clear:

1. Folding CCT into DECD will severely hamper CCT's services, a great many of which—such as historic preservation grants and tax credits—actually *spur* economic growth in the state. The governor anticipates gutting CCT's grant and tax-credit programs, which might save a few million dollars now, but it will result in snuffing out *hundreds* of millions of dollars in state revenue generated from CCT's historic preservation and film programs. Furthermore, the Governor is mandated by state and federal statute to maintain a State Historic Preservation Office. Cutting CCT off at the knees will virtually shut down that division, which could result in the loss of millions of dollars in federal funding for preservation efforts.
2. CCT already experienced a draconian belt-tightening six years ago when Governor Rowland took divisions *out of* DECD and merged them with the state's Arts and Historic Preservation divisions to create the Commission on Culture and Tourism. It's counter-productive and a waste of state dollars to have CCT folded back into DECD.
3. The chances look promising that tourism revenues will increase substantially for the foreseeable future as fewer people in the region will be booking expensive vacations in faraway places. Therefore, the state cannot afford to debilitate one of its biggest money-making agencies. According to a *New York Times* editorial (11/30/07), Connecticut ranks 40th of 50 states in government investments in tourism. Even though tourism generates over \$9 billion annually in state revenues, CCT's budget has been cut by 30% since its creation in 2003. *It makes no sense to further cripple an agency that generates so much more in revenue for the state than it costs to run.*

These days, the Commission on Culture and Tourism is a safer bet to grow Connecticut's economy than casino gambling. Why does the governor seem intent on folding a winning hand? Please save Culture and Tourism.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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