

To: **COMMISSION ON ENHANCING AGENCY OUTCOMES**

From: Ryan Odinak, Executive Director

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Re: **TESTIMONY for PUBLIC HEARING- April 28 and April 30, 2009**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit views on the consolidation of the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) into the Department of Community and Economic Development (DECD).

For the following reasons, I would recommend that the committee not consolidate the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism into the Department of Economic and Community Development.

- **Visibility:** Keeping the visibility of CCT and all its divisions high is extremely important to promoting arts and culture. This change comes just as the CCT divisions are beginning to work together effectively and will cause a huge disruption to the strategic process that has been put in place.
- **Funding:** Connecticut has, for a number of years, received much-needed funding from the National Endowment for the Arts by virtue of State Arts Partnership Agreements with the NEA. Currently, CCT receives \$749,000.00 - a critical component of their overall funding for the benefit of arts constituents. This funding could be lost if extreme care is not taken with how any proposed 'merger' of the CCT and DECD is structured. In order to enter a partnership with the NEA, a state arts agency "must have its own board, council, or commission;" and "have completed a comprehensive planning process, including public meetings on its state plan, and compiled a list of responses to recommendations from those meetings."

When the old CT Commission on the Arts (which had received NEA funding) was incorporated into the CCT, the NEA determined that the Arts Committee of the new entity, the CCT, qualified as a separate board, thus satisfying the "board, council or commission" requirement and permitting us to continue to receive NEA funding. If some sort of similar qualifying structure is not provided for the Arts component in any merger with DECD, NEA funding would be lost.

In short, the arts industry in Connecticut could lose federal funding if great care is not taken in structuring the proposed merger, should this plan proceed.

*The **Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County** serves the 15 towns of lower Fairfield County by supporting cultural organizations and artists through coordinated marketing, professional development, collaborative initiatives and advocacy. There are over 200 nonprofit cultural organizations and hundreds of artists in this region ranging from small chorales to major museum and tourism attractions such as the zoo and aquarium.*

