

April 30, 2009

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

My name is Jeffry Muthersbaugh and I serve as chairman 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 Governor's proposed merger of the Commission on Culture and Tourism into Department of Economic and Community Development.

The Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) was created by a merger in 2005. After four years of major effort and a not inconsiderable amount of money to move all divisions of the Commission into one space, this is an agency that works efficiently and effectively in the fields of historic preservation, arts, tourism and film.

The work of the CCT, especially the historic preservation division, is not redundant with that of DECD. This division is the official federally recognized State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). DECD does not deal with historic preservation and in fact does not acknowledge on its informational web site anything about historic preservation as being part of economic and community development.

If you search historic preservation on DECD's web site you will come up with "no results found."

Historic preservation projects, especially those over which the State Historic Preservation Office has oversight and review obligations, are documented to be labor intensive, environmentally friendly and lead to community revitalization. The Governor's Five Principles of Smart Growth include Historic Preservation as a key strategy.

For the State of CT to subsume its responsive and well respected historic preservation office into a cubby hole with no identity and a skeleton staff in the name of Government Efficiency flies in the face of the state's stated goals for smart growth and does not save money or make for a more efficient state government.

Other testimony on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Office delves further into the potential loss of federal funds and the stalling of use of stimulus dollars this merger presents.

Let me conclude by saying that the State Historic Preservation Office within the CCT is one of the most highly respected SHPO's in the nation – its staff is highly professional and responsive to community needs and concerns. It would be wasteful, would lead to a loss of federal funds and is anti- smart growth to delete historic preservation from the State of Connecticut's priorities.

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