

Date: April 30, 2009
To: Jared.Kupiec@cga.ct.gov
Re: CT Commission on Culture & Tourism
From: Arts & Culture Collaborative, Waterbury Region

The Arts & Culture Collaborative, Waterbury Region (ACC) wishes to address the Governor's proposal to place the Commission on Culture & Tourism (CCT) within the Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD).

While we recognize that government costs are under severe pressure, absorption of the CCT by DECD will cause more problems than it will solve because:

- The two cultures are incompatible.
 - a) Witness when the Film Division was with DECD: it became more effective when it left DECD and functioned under CCT.
 - b) Witness when Tourism left DECD and became part of CCT: it expanded, culturally and economically.
 - c) Neither division desires to return to DECD.
- It is our understanding that, if this proposal to absorb CCT into DECD occurs, Connecticut will be about the only state without an independent Arts Commission.
- It is our understanding that federal grants, such as those from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as foundation funds, are funneled through State Arts Commissions, thus causing a severe problem if the CCT ceases to be independent. What arts-focused foundation will commit funds to an account titled "Economic & Community Development?"
 - a) Witness the number of arts groups in Connecticut which aren't eligible for stimulus funds for technical reasons which will be compounded if CCT is absorbed by DECD.
- Art organizations provide an economic advantage to cities and towns as they also focus on the quality of life. A city devoid of culture will die, regardless of any level of pure "economic development."

The ACC believes that if the Commission on Culture and Tourism was not absorbed into DECD, it would be able to focus directly on the unique needs and attributes of arts, culture and tourism while continuing to foster an environment that would allow these areas to flourish and grow, thus creating jobs and contributing to economic development on its own.

We know that Connecticut needs to economize, but let's not create a bureaucracy to govern what it doesn't understand to the detriment of Connecticut's citizens and more directly our children, the future citizens whom we hope to retain in Connecticut by improving the quality of their lives.

Thank you kindly for your consideration.

Arts & Culture Collaborative, Waterbury Region
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cc Waterbury Area Legislators
Legislative Leadership