



DATE: March 01, 2022

TO: Committee on Commerce

FROM: Julia Wilcox, Senior Public Policy & Division Advisor, The Alliance

RE: HB 5267: An Act Concerning the Department of Economic and Community Development's Strategic Planning Regarding the Promotion of Arts and Culture

Good Morning, Senator Hartley, Representative Currey, Senator Martin, Representative Buckbee, and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee:

My name is Julia Wilcox, Senior Public Policy & Division Advisor at the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide organization representing the nonprofit sector. Community nonprofits provide essential services to more than half a million people and families in Connecticut every year and employ 115,000 Connecticut workers, improving the quality of life in communities across the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 5267: An Act Concerning The Department of Economic and Community Development's Strategic Planning Regarding the Promotion of Arts and Culture.

HB 5267 would require the Department of Economic and Community Development to include the arts and culture industries in the department's strategic state-wide marketing plan. The Alliance supports the measures that this bill seeks to implement, including the following requirements of the Department of Economic and Community Development:

1. Market and promote Connecticut as a destination for leisure and business travelers through the development and implementation of a strategic state-wide marketing plan and provision of visitor services to enhance the economic impact of the tourism, [industry] arts and culture industries;
2. Promote the arts;
3. Recognize, protect, preserve and promote historic resources;
4. Interpret and present Connecticut's history and culture;
5. Promote Connecticut as a location in which to produce digital media and motion pictures and to establish and conduct business related to the digital media and motion picture industries to enhance these industries' economic impact in the state;
6. Establish a uniform financial reporting system and forms to be used by each regional tourism district, established under section 10-397, in the preparation of the annual budget submitted to the General Assembly; and
7. Integrate funding and programs whenever possible.

Existing law requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to enhance the tourism industry's economic impact by (1) developing and implementing a strategic statewide marketing plan and (2) providing visitor services. HB 5267 requires DECD to also enhance the economic impact of the arts and culture industries through these means. By law, the Connecticut Tourism Council is charged with, among other things, reviewing and approving or recommending changes to DECD's strategic statewide marketing plan (CGS § 10-397c(b)).

We commend the Committee for introducing this legislation and acknowledging the importance of the arts and culture industries and the creative economy. Arts, Cultural and Historic Preservation programs that enrich our communities are provided by many nonprofit organizations in Connecticut. Visual and performance artists and cultural organizations enrich the quality of life for every community in Connecticut and contribute substantially to our economy. The Alliance’s request to increase funding this year by an additional 8% for community nonprofits, includes support of nonprofit arts and culture programs that enrich the quality of life for every community in Connecticut and contribute substantially to our economy.

The proposed legislation builds on the momentum of the legislature over the past few years, to acknowledge the value of the creative economy in Connecticut, and to provide support as they rebuild from the devastating impact of the pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Julia Z. Wilcox, Senior Public Policy & Division Advisor

[JWilcox@ctnonprofitalliance.org](mailto:JWilcox@ctnonprofitalliance.org)