

Connecticut-Ireland Trade Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2026

10:00 a.m. in Commerce Conference Room 3803 in 3800 of the LOB

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday February 17th, by Emmett Riley and Loretto Leary.

The following committee members were present: Emmet Riley, Loretto Leary, Rep. Meskers, Christine Kinealy, Senator Hartley, Paddi LeShane, Marty Dunleavy, Alex Dahlem

The following committee members were absent:

I. CONVENE MEETING

Emmett Riley and Loretto Leary made opening remarks.

II. REMARKS BY THE CHAIRS

There were no remarks by the chairs.

III. SPEAKERS – Senator Mark Daly: 26th Chair of the Senate of Ireland

There will be no registration fee for this year's AISLC Summit. A new addition to the summit will be going to the Assembly in Northern Ireland, and meeting some of their trade representatives to find businesses that might be interested in coming to Connecticut.

The Annual Meeting of the Trade Commissioners and State Legislators at the National Conference of State legislators which is held in Chicago this year is another opportunity to address Irish companies looking to have a footprint in Connecticut.

The AISLC is an opportunity to ensure that policy is proper while working with the U.S. and European Union.

Biographies have been sent, which are draft biographies. If there are any errors in the biographies, please let us know, because they will be shared with state agencies.

AISLC will set up meetings with groups, agencies, and universities that the commission would like to meet to set up a Connecticut branch at the AISLC Summit.

Rep. Meskers asks if there is a monthly or quarterly information on facilitating of trade policy, and if so that Connecticut could use existing legislation to aid the Connecticut-Ireland Trade Commission.

Members should receive the monthly newsletter from the American Irish State Legislative Service Caucus.

Commission needs a report, which has to be filed in Maine. If there is not the necessary paperwork filed Ireland may not recognize the commission due to bills passed in the Irish Senate.

Rep. Meskers asks Senator Daly to find what barriers to entry they are having in Ireland with the commercial side, and if there is legislation that can foster that trade.

Emmett Riley thanks Senator Daly for speaking to the commission and providing clarity on legislators, training workforce, and implementation of new initiatives in light of AISLC.

IV. AISLC (AMERICAN IRISH STATE LEGISLATORS CAUCUS)

Everyone is not required to go, except for the chairs. If anyone is interested, please let the administrator know, as well as updating biography information should go to the administrator.

V. MEETING WITH SENATOR BOB DUFF

Senator Duff advises that the commission should draft a letter on having a separate website, funding for the commission, and emails. The Co-chairs of the commission are planning to work with the Puerto Rican Trade Commission to establish parameters for both commissions.

Rep. Meskers advises mentioning the India Trade Commission and German Trade Commission as those commissions will need similar structural support in the coming years.

Rep. Meskers advises to potentially reach out to Tommy Hyde and DECD to see what they are doing at the state level for websites, and how they create a page where businesses can go to.

Sen. Hartley asks to see the letter to legislative management regarding a website, and how much funding the commission plans to ask for.

Sen. Hartley proposes that the commission should be entitled to an intern in every session, and all other new trade commissions should also be able to have that opportunity with a stipend from the appropriations budget.

VI. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

Paddi LeShane states DAS controls anything that has a CT.gov on it and asks if there can be gift donations. If possibly there are ways to leverage companies in trying to put the website together on a pro-bono basis.

Administrator notes that in the Commerce Page on the Connecticut General Assembly's website you can find all the links to events, minutes, agendas, membership, etc.

VII. CT OPEN HOUSE DAY – JUNE 13TH, 2026

Loretto Leary asks to connect with Dr. Kinealy to create a talk that Connecticut-Ireland could do in conjunction with Irish-America 250.

Loretto Leary asks to maybe make it a whole day event with speaker for that event. Also, ask Dr. Kinealy to aid in setting up the Connecticut Irish American Heritage Trail for CT Open house day.

Dr. Kinealy says we need to set up a topic, and it is not time sensitive since the commission has until the end of the year. An opportunity would be to set up something in Irish Black Heritage month which is in October

VIII. "SHARED HOMEPLACE" IRISH GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Launched in November in 2025 in Ireland. There are branches and diaspora is one of them which will go on until 2030. Proposal to make video loops of U.S. universities that have shared reciprocity with Irish universities.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rep. Meskers wants to invite the Irish-Trade Commission to speak at Met Life Building and will send the contacts to the commission.

X. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday the 12th of May.

XI. ADJOURN MEETING

Emmett Riley adjourned the meeting.

Ava Del Vescovo

Connecticut-Ireland Trade Commission Intern