



January 29, 2018

Commission of Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth
Mr. James Smith
Mr. Robert Patricelli

Dear Co-Chair Smith, Co-Chair Patricelli and distinguished members of the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth,

My name is Ginny Kozlowski, and I am the CEO of the Economic Development Corporation of New Haven (EDCNH).

I would like to thank members of the Commission for their willingness to lead the way toward fiscal stability and economic growth in Connecticut.

As you know, our region is home to strong and growing sectors of the economy, notably Healthcare, Bioscience, Higher Education and Advanced Manufacturing. These are essential sectors which should be included in the proposed strategy in a manner consistent with the region's comprehensive economic development strategy. Please visit rexdevelopment.com for a copy and more information on these strategies.

This morning, however, I am encouraging members of this Commission to consider how we can leverage other established economic drivers, such as the hospitality industry. With over a million visitors annually to New Haven, this sector plays a crucial economic role in the entire region.

New Haven is the host to many business conferences and association meetings due to the cutting-edge research coming out of Yale University, medical-related travel to the Yale-New Haven Healthcare System and educational tourism around the City's four institutions of higher learning and related museums.

Our inherent strength in this sector is threatened by an aging transportation infrastructure, including rail reliability and highway traffic congestion. Many residents in South Central Connecticut are employed in the travel and tourism industry and their jobs depend on robust transportation services for both business and leisure travelers. Tourism is a very competitive industry, as witnessed by the constant stream of advertisements in all media outlets. If we aren't prepared to provide an outstanding experience from beginning to end, another state will.

New Haven is the most walkable city in Connecticut, home to great cultural attractions including the Yale University Art Gallery, Shubert Theatre, fantastic restaurants and, of course, world renowned pizza. Even with these remarkable offerings, if the effort of traveling in and around the region becomes untenable, we are in the unenviable position of losing both jobs and tax revenue.

Here are a few facts about Statewide Travel and Tourism:

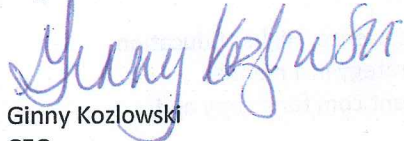
- Occupancy tax collections **increased by \$3.0M** from \$119,739,632 in FY 2016 to \$122,785,852 in FY 2017. Investing in state tourism marketing is the source of an essential revenue stream, not expenditure. Source: CT Dept. of Revenue, FY 2015-2016 Annual Report, www.ct.gov/drs
- With a 15% state occupancy tax, the lodging industry financially supports many of the Connecticut's programs beyond tourism.
- The hospitality sector provides vast opportunities for employees to advance their career goals through fast-track promotions, on-the-job training and room for growth and development.

- As of December 2017, there are 150,400 jobs in this sector which is more than the population of Bridgeport. Over 4,000 jobs have been added since the beginning of the recession in 2008. *Source: CT Dep. of Labor, www.ctdol.state.ct.us*
- Supports the quality of life that retains businesses and employees
- Provides opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Your work is leading toward structural change and sustainable fiscal policy which will lead to economic growth. Please consider the dramatic impact and economic value of Connecticut as a destination and let's make concerted efforts to once-again welcome visitors to our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. If you have any questions or concerns I am happy to respond.

Regards,



Ginny Kozlowski
CEO

Economic Development Corporation of New Haven