



Waterbury Regional Chamber
driving business to business

Testimony of Lynn Ward, President & CEO
Waterbury Regional Chamber
Before the Commerce Committee
Hartford, CT
February 25, 2025

Testifying in **support** of:

House Bill 6881: An Act Concerning Arts, Culture and Tourism

Chairwoman Hartle Chairman Meskers, Vice-Chairs Rahman and Keitt, Ranking Members Martin and Aniskovich, and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee: the Waterbury Regional Chamber, which serves 14 towns in the greater Waterbury region and represents the collective interests of 900 members in matters of public policy and economic development, strongly supports HB 6881 An Act Concerning Arts, Culture and Tourism.

HB 6881 requires the Department of Economic and Community Development to conduct a study relating to investments in arts, culture and tourism in the state of Connecticut and report its findings to this committee by January 1, 2026. The Waterbury Chamber believes this study would be highly beneficial in the resurgence of the state's tourism initiative and help achieve mutual arts, culture and tourism economic development policy goals. Unfortunately, this research was not built into the Governor's Biennial Budget, so funding would have to be identified from an additional revenue source.

The Waterbury Regional supports House Bill 6881 which would require the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to conduct a comprehensive study on arts, culture, and tourism within the state. We urge legislators to ensure this effort build on other arts sector studies that have been conducted. We work closely with many organizations to bring regional and international visitors to our region and district. Without the funding recognized in the Governors previous budget, the economic boost Tourism, Arts and Culture bring to Connecticut will undoubtedly cease to exist.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Lynn Ward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Lynn Ward
President & CEO