Background: Following upon the highly successful bond approved in 2014 to support arts and historic cultural facilities, a new $6.0 Million ballot initiative for Arts and Historic Infrastructure is proposed as a part of Housing and Infrastructure Bond.

$5 million will go to the State’s largest arts organizations, Trinity Repertory Company and the Rhode Island Philharmonic, and $2 million will be split between grant programs for smaller organizations managed through the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC).

Action needed now: Encourage members of the General Assembly to support funding for the Arts and Historic Infrastructure Grants.

Reasons for supporting funding for arts, cultural and historic facilities:

Repairing and investing in cultural facilities and historic properties boosts the Rhode Island economy.

- Taking care of special places has a ripple effect in neighborhoods and communities across Rhode Island.
- Economic benefits are direct as capital investments creates jobs for Rhode Islanders: for roofers, carpenters, electricians, masons, plumbers, architects, engineers and other specialized craftspeople.
- Economic effects multiply, creating vital and thriving communities, attracting tourists and residents.

Our prized historic structures and cultural facilities are starved for money to make vital repairs.

- For many custodians of historic buildings and cultural facilities deferred maintenance has been the only solution.
- Roofs leak, safety systems are outdated or out of code, the list goes on and on.
- Funding from the 2014 state Arts and Culture bond is exhausted; both RISCA and RIHPHC programs were oversubscribed and met only a small portion of the need.

It will help historic municipal and non-profit buildings leverage key funding.

- Every dollar of state funds invested requires at least a one-to-one match.
- The match requirement catalyzes broad community support. A state grant acts as a stamp of approval and helps unleash private funds for the selected preservation projects.

Heritage tourism, so vital to the Rhode Island economy, will benefit the state in the following ways:

- According to a 2017 study, Heritage Tourism accounts for 9.8 million visitors each year, contributing nearly $1.4 billion to Rhode Island’s economy.
- Revitalized communities attract visitors who tour museums, stay in hotels, dine at restaurants, and shop locally.
- Rhode Island’s unique historic assets impart an attractive cultural character to our communities, draw in visitors and generate significant revenues we can’t afford to forego.
- With wonderful historic assets and vibrant arts offerings, Rhode Island is a destination appealing to visitors seeking a unique blend of cosmopolitan cool and historic charm.