



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

August 2, 2016

Michael Brandi
Executive Director &
General Counsel
State Elections Enforcement
Commission
20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Carol Carson
Executive Director
Office of State Ethics
18-20 Trinity Street, #205
Hartford, CT 06106

Colleen Murphy
Executive Director & General
Counsel
Freedom of Information
Commission
18-20 Trinity Street, #100
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Attorney Brandi, Ms. Carson, and Attorney Murphy:

Thank you for your letter dated July 6, 2016, requesting relief from the FY 2017 holdbacks. To put the issue in context, the adopted budget includes allocable bottom line savings (lapses) of more than \$209.3 million in the General Fund. The total assigned to your agencies is \$183,023, with \$96,032 of that sum assigned to the State Elections Enforcement Commission, \$42,549 to the Office of State Ethics and \$44,442 to the Freedom of Information Commission.

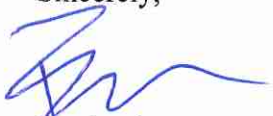
You cite several statutory provisions you believe relevant to relief from the assigned holdbacks. However, the statutory references to the appropriations "recommended" for your agencies are not, in my view, germane to the issue of the budget adopted for your agencies. Further, I do not accept your interpretation of the statutory language regarding reductions to allotment requisitions or allotments in force. The holdbacks that you seek relief from were made pursuant to the authority granted in the adopted budget for FY 2017 to achieve targeted savings in the executive branch, subject to the specific limitations listed therein. The statutory language you cite relate to the Governor's statutory rescission authority rather than to the specific authority in the adopted budget to achieve the targeted savings.

Rather than debate the point, I think it is more important to note that your agencies were not unfairly or disproportionately targeted in assigning the holdbacks: all facets of state government, including the Legislative and Judicial branches, are coping with reduced resources. While I understand the operational challenges that holdbacks of any sort will mean to your agencies, they are only 3 percent of your budget. Most agencies received a comparable reduction to their operating funds, including the offices of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, Comptroller, Attorney General and Secretary of the State, and a number of agencies received much larger reductions. Relief from holdbacks assigned to you will only mean that services must be further reduced in some other Executive branch agency.

You note in your letter that you have accepted holdbacks in prior years "out of a commitment to act as partners in helping to solve the state's dire fiscal situation." I can only hope that you

continue to recognize your shared responsibility to act in partnership rather than contest the application of the holdbacks. Please let me know whether you are willing to do your part.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ben Barnes', written in a cursive style.

Benjamin Barnes
Secretary