



ALLIANCE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

"Could we ever know each other in the slightest without the arts?"

Canadian poet Gabrielle Roy (1909 – 1983)
as quoted on the Canadian \$20 bill

What the Cultural Community Asks of Leaders & Leadership Hopefuls

An Open Letter to All BC Party Leaders & Leadership Candidates

With three of British Columbia's political parties now engaged in leadership contests, this is the time for the arts, culture and heritage community to ask all party leaders and leadership candidates to answer some straightforward questions.

As you probably know, BC stands last in all provinces and territories in terms of public investment for operating grants for arts organizations. This must be changed, for the cultural, economic and social health of our province.

To that end, we call upon all candidates to tell us if they support the following four principal positions of the creative community. Some candidates have already made statements on a few of these issues, but our concerns are interrelated and need to be addressed as a whole.

Will you, as the leader or potential leader of your party, if elected to government:

1. Follow the unanimous recommendation of the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services' to immediately return "to overall actual funding levels of 2008/09 to encourage an independent and creative cultural sector" and restore previous eligibility and access criteria?

This would include the amount of funding for arts and cultural organizations supported through Gaming revenues and a continued allocation from the Arts Legacy Fund (\$7 million) to the BCAC in the next two fiscal years to supplement the BCAC's base appropriation.

2. Honour the provincial government's 1999 Memorandum of Agreement with the BC Association for Charitable Gaming to allocate 33.3 percent of net gaming revenues to charities and non-profits, or renegotiate that agreement in good faith?
3. Take meaningful and measurable steps, in your first mandate, towards raising BC's per-capita funding of the arts, cultural and heritage sector to at least the national average?
4. Engage in an arts community driven consultative process with the goal of developing a coherent and sustainable cultural development and arts funding policy for the province of British Columbia?

The time for unclear reassurances is over. All of British Columbia's political parties now have an opportunity to put forward clear and progressive cultural funding policies as planks in their leadership and next election campaigns.

We expect no less than unqualified commitments from all leaders and leadership hopefuls.

Sincerely,
Amir Ali Alibhai
Executive Director
Alliance for Arts and Culture
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