



December 30, 2009

File No.: CR-11-01-RCU

The Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Campbell:

Re: Provincial Cutbacks to Cultural Services

At its meeting of October 30, 2009, the Metro Vancouver Board expressed concern over arts funding levels in British Columbia. As a result, I write on behalf of the Board Members to communicate their uneasiness at the proposed provincial cutbacks to cultural services and in particular cultural funding grants.

I am sure we all agree that culture is a crucial component of our communities. Culture animates our neighbourhoods and provides opportunities for people of all ethnic and social backgrounds to share and interact. Cultural producers contribute to our economy by generating the new ideas and practices that creative enterprises incorporate in order to produce content and other competitive products.

Culture also contributes to the economic viability and sustainability of our communities and the Directors of the Board of Metro Vancouver are concerned that the cuts, which are proposed by the Province, could have serious economic and social impacts affecting each and every municipality.

I am informed that in 2006, the total operating revenue for the performing arts in Canada encompassing theatre, dance, music and opera reached \$1.2 billion. Of that amount, 42% was generated by ticket sales to 12.9 million audience members who attended performing arts events.

I am also told that the cultural sector as a whole is estimated to contribute \$84.6 billion to Canada's GDP. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Arts' website notes that the province makes its cultural investment back in direct taxes at a rate of 138%. In addition, the Province of BC estimates that for every dollar invested in the arts, the arts organizations in turn generate \$1.36 in economic activity.

The Arts and Culture Division of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts is authorized to develop and administer government policies and programs that support a vital and sustainable arts and culture sector. The Board members of Metro Vancouver are concerned that the proposed cuts will stifle continued support for all art forms.

On November 13, 2009, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recommended that arts funding be restored to 2008-09 levels in British Columbia. We trust that you will consider this request as we urge the government to adopt the recommendations.

Yours truly,

Original signed by:

Lois E. Jackson
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board
LEJ/HS/jr

cc: UBCM and all cities and regional districts in the Province – to be disseminated by CIVICINFO BC