



October 1, 2019

Honorable Kaycee Madu
Minister of Municipal Affairs
Office of the Minister
Municipal Affairs
132 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

RE: Funding Freeze for Alberta Libraries

Dear Minister Madu,

The Manitoba Library Association (MLA) is writing to you to encourage the Provincial Government to continue its valuable support for public libraries in Alberta. Recent news articles have kept us informed of temporary funding freeze while the government develops its budget. We wish to add our voice to promote and advocate on behalf of public libraries across Canada.

Public libraries provide the resources and the capacity that allow communities to flourish. Libraries address community needs that are essential to the public; they are a key pillar of educational infrastructure for literacy development, lifelong learning, and community programming. Libraries help unemployed or underemployed people find jobs. They provide the community with free internet access and access to information, thus ensuring the ability for all to access services that require on-line submissions only. They are the great equalizer. Reductions to funding for public libraries will reduce opportunities, and quite simply, 'electronic or alternate media' cannot replace the programs and services public libraries provide to the population of your Province.

We understand that in Alberta some of the funding that is provided by the Province includes funding for interlibrary loans and SuperNet broadband connections, both of which are essential to rural public libraries [Edmonton Journal, August 14, 2019]. We encourage the

Province to consult with stakeholders, including citizens, public libraries, the Alberta Library Trustees Association (ALTA), the Library Association of Alberta, the Alberta Association of Library Technicians, and any other partners, in order to make an informed decision as to appropriate funding.

We would end by quoting our colleagues at ALTA in their letter to your attention of August 13, 2019, which quite effectively provides the rationale for continued support:

“If the provincial government is looking for a single institution that can further their initiatives and have positive impacts on entire constituencies, the public library is it!”

Sincerely,



Kerry Macdonald
Vice-President / Acting President
Manitoba Library Association

cc: Dr. Tanya Pollard, President, Alberta Library Trustees Association
Ms Briana Ehnes, President, Library Association of Alberta
Ms Kristian McInnis, President, Alberta Association of Library Technicians
Honourable Cathy Cox, Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage