



THE WRITERS'
UNION OF CANADA

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The Honourable Christy Clark
Premier
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

The Honourable Ida Chong
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

July 21, 2011

Dear Premier Clark and Minister Chong:

On behalf of The Writers' Union of Canada we would like to express our appreciation to you for the recent announcement that funding for the BC Arts Council will be maintained. This was an important campaign promise, and we are pleased to see its expeditious fulfillment.

The Writers' Union of Canada is a national organization representing the professional book authors in this country, and we have been watching with concern the cuts being experienced by the arts in BC. A quarter of our membership is in the province, and they will heartily welcome this announcement. And we are certain that the millions of British Columbians who publish, print, distribute, promote, edit, sell, and read our books will greet this stability in arts funding with applause.

While this is welcome news and a step forward, more needs to be done. Even at a restored level of funding, the BCAC is unable to effectively fulfill its strategic plan: creating a sustainable and thriving arts and culture sector in the province. We support all efforts to increase the Council's funding as soon as possible, to ensure that the sector is able to make its contribution to our society and economy.

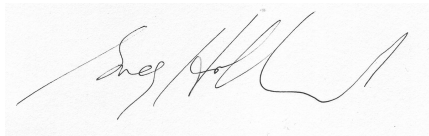
This is especially pertinent given the economic benefits of the arts sector. The BC government's own figures demonstrate that every \$1 of government investment in the Arts returns approximately \$1.36 in revenues from taxes, fees and other sources. The European Union has demonstrated that every dollar spent on the arts saves governments \$7 in future costs for remedial education, health services, policing, the courts, the corrections systems, and other social services. At a time of economic constraint, investing in activities that will generate such positive returns and reduce the need for government spending elsewhere can only support growth and recovery.

We hope that an announcement confirming the restoration of the funding for Arts and Culture through the Gaming revenues will follow shortly. The restoration of the Gaming revenues – and clarity around eligibility criteria and allocations to Arts and Culture – is essential to

providing stability to the sector and to planning for the future. The loss of approximately \$11 million to the sector since 2009 has had a devastating effect for many organizations, which the restoration of funding to the BCAC will not be sufficient to address.

We appreciate your demonstrated commitment and look forward to your continued leadership, which will be essential to a healthy cultural sector in BC.

Sincerely,



Greg Hollingshead
Chair



Michael Elcock
BC/Yukon Representative