



:. ontario library association

The Hon. James Moore,
Minister of Canadian Heritage
and Official Languages
House of Commons
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May 28, 2012

Dear Minister Moore,
I am writing to you on behalf of more than 5,000 members of the Ontario Library Association, the largest library association in Canada, to express our grave concern regarding the announcement on April 30, 2012 of severe cuts to staff and services at Library and Archives Canada (LAC). Our association shares the concerns of our colleagues at the Canadian Library Association, as outlined in their letter to you: <http://bit.ly/KzK8fv>

While we understand the urgency to move Library and Archives Canada into the digital world, the announcement of cuts is disturbingly void of any information which might provide assurance that our “analogue” or printed heritage will be systematically acquired, cared for and made accessible to all Canadians, as per the LAC mandate. Nor can we determine how the drastic cuts to the staff complement will make it possible to move the digital agenda forward, when it appears that the professional expertise needed to acquire, care for, and make heritage resources available has been let go.

Over the past year, we have repeatedly expressed our extreme frustration to LAC management, regarding LAC’s inadequate communication surrounding new projects, institutional reform, and future directions. There has been a glaring gap in communication particularly with provincial level associations. When the very existence of our national memory is being threatened, it is even more critical that open and ongoing communication and consultation take place between the institution and the clients that it serves – the people of Canada. In the interest of open and transparent government, the citizens of Canada deserve to be informed about LAC’s current and future activities. The current Report on Plans and Priorities for LAC is very high level and does not give a glimpse of the actual impact of these cuts. We urge you Minister Moore, to take urgent action on this front by making the operational plans available and encourage consultation with the library and archival communities so we can understand the depth and breadth



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of the changes. Because we have no such detail to review, the community fears that LAC will no longer have the capacity to achieve its full mandate and as a result, a great hole will appear in our nation's collective memory. That gap will have a huge impact on future generations of Canadians who will be researching and looking to understand the history of their country and themselves and finding a whole range of documentary heritage resources missing. This is not the legacy we want to leave our children.

We remain hopeful that Dr. Caron's keynote presentation and open dialogue session with the library community at the Canadian Library Association's annual conference in Ottawa on May 30 will shed some light on the details. Although the commitment to make this presentation was made long before the announcement of these cuts, we hope that this will signal the beginning of a two-way discussion and consultation concerning the future of our published heritage and an outreach effort to your partners in library associations across Canada.

We are looking forward, as we learn more, to determine how we can work in partnership with LAC to ensure Canada's published heritage is accessible for generations to come.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Best Regards,



Karen McGrath, President

cc The Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister
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cc Dr. Daniel Caron, Librarian and Archivist of Canada
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