

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

To the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Dear Committee Members,

Every day in our communities we see firsthand the need for strong public libraries. Throughout the current COVID-19 crisis public libraries served communities by offering educational and learning tools, providing entertainment, maintaining connections for those who are isolated, and supporting access to government health information to communities made vulnerable. Public libraries are transformative in maintaining literacy, democratic engagement, and in delivering equitable access to information. Everyday public libraries ensure access to resources that communities need and rely on.

Public libraries improve people's lives and are a critically important part of a community's social and economic infrastructure, especially in times of crisis.

Public libraries have not seen an increase in core provincial funding since 2010 yet continue to expand services and programs to ensure communities have access to resources, technology, and expert individual assistance. The time is right for Government to demonstrate a commitment to all community members who rely on public libraries for information, learning resources, assistance, entertainment, and connections to each other.

Please consider permanent increases to the annual operational grant to public libraries and please consider a one-time \$3 million investment in training and professional development for public library staff and for those who support public libraries. Help us build stable and sustainable public libraries.

Investing in public libraries means investing in BC's social and economic infrastructure and supporting individuals, families, and communities. For all British Columbians, public libraries make life more affordable, improve access to services that people count on, and support the development and rebuilding of strong and sustainable economies.

**Investing in public libraries is investing in the future of our communities.**

Sincerely,

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