



*To support and represent trustees in advancing public libraries*

September 21, 2016

Dear BC Public Library Trustees,

As you may be aware, the *Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services* has begun its annual consultation process in preparation for the 2017 provincial budget. I'm writing to encourage you to participate in this all-party consultation. With an election coming up next May, it's one way to be heard by members of all parties.

There are various ways to participate. Public hearings began on Monday, Sept. 19, and will occur around the province. You can also submit a written, audio or video submission, or complete the on-line survey. **The deadline for all of these submissions is October 14<sup>th</sup>.** More information on how to participate is found at [www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/finance](http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/finance).

BCLTA will be submitting the following budget priorities. These are priorities we have heard from trustees and boards and that we have discussed with our partners, the BC Library Association, the Libraries Co-op, and ABCPLD (representing public library directors).

1. Provincial funding that, at a minimum, includes annual increases to account for inflation. While libraries appreciate the stability of grant funding that government has provided since 2010 (approximately \$14 million per year), the lack of regular increases means that each year libraries receive less and less support, due to inflationary pressures. After many years of this, libraries are falling behind in their ability to meet growing needs.
2. The establishment of provincial policy for the delivery of public library services in First Nation communities, by First Nation communities, is required. Many of these communities have few to no library services, and this gap inhibits opportunities for them to learn, discover and create – opportunities available to other British Columbians.
3. Government commitment to connectivity is needed. Connectivity is critical in the digital age, yet adequate broadband is always in short supply and/or cost-prohibitive, particularly in rural or remote locations. Most libraries are faced with both rising costs and rising demand.

I appreciate that you may have comments to make based on your local needs and priorities, but please consider adding some or all of the three points above to your presentation, submission or survey response. The more voices, the stronger the message. Please use this opportunity.

If you do make a submission, be sure to cc your MLA and the Minister of Education.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Donna Macdonald, President, BCLTA