Dear [MLA],

When a family sits down to do their yearly budget, they quickly see the effect of an income that has remained static year-over-year. They see inflation nibbling away at the value of the dollars they receive, so those dollars don’t go as far as they once did.

BC’s public libraries are like that family. Since 2010, the government’s allocation to support public libraries has remained unchanged at about $14 million. While stability of funding is appreciated, the lack of any increase to counter inflation has made budgeting increasingly difficult.

We are writing to ask you to support and speak out for an inflationary increase for public libraries during the upcoming provincial budget discussions. Now that Provincial revenues are healthy, we request an annual adjustment for libraries, indexed into the future. At a minimum, we request a single-year inflationary increase of 2% over 2016, which will cost a modest $280,000.

We are supported in this request by the recommendation of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services:

82. Provide inflation-adjusted funding increases to public libraries to enable them to sustain basic levels of service and consider additional increases to implement new innovations in service delivery (“indexation of the grant”).

Provincial funding is important to all BC libraries, but particularly for smaller, rural libraries who struggle with modest budgets at the best of times. However, all libraries share the knowledge that they’re falling behind in their ability to meet growing needs and fulfill their potential as contributors to the economic vitality, social well-being and cultural development of our province and our communities.

We share Government’s vision that our public libraries provide British Columbians with access to the information and tools they need to learn, work, create and thrive in today’s changing world. We are asking for your support to ensure we can fulfill that vision.

We look forward to receiving your response to our request.

Sincerely,

[board chair]