

June 13, 2019

Attention: Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Regarding 2020 BC Government Budget Priorities

Dear Committee Members,

This submission is on behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Creston Valley Public Library.

We would like to add our voices to the importance of provincial support for public libraries. Public libraries are integral public institutions, providing opportunity for all community members. Every person who uses the public library is one more person given the tools to thrive. This makes our communities better for all. Investment in public libraries is an investment in the economic and social prosperity of the province.

We appreciate the provincial government's recognition of the public library funding issue. In 2017 the provincial government, in response to the UBCM Resolution B60, acknowledged that the cost of delivering public library services has increased with changing technology and other demands. We are heartened that we all share the understanding of the need for adequate and reliable provincial funding for public libraries.

Across the 247 public library service points serving BC we are making a difference to community social and economic development and individual well-being through many initiatives such as:

- Reconciliation initiatives that open dialogue and advance the TRC Calls to Action.
 - [The Blanket Exercise](#), Nelson Public Library
 - [Let's Talk about Reconciliation: Indigenous Film Series](#), Surrey Libraries
 - [Honouring Reconciliation: Ambleside by Canoe](#), West Vancouver Memorial Library
- People accessing the information and resources they need for personal enjoyment and life needs, learning new skills, starting a local business, and connecting with government services, with the help of expert library staff and connectivity that bridges the continued digital divide.
 - [Lynda.com Courses](#), Creston Valley Public Library
 - [Assistive Services](#), Greater Victoria Public Library
 - [Outreach / Homebound Services](#), Castlegar Public Library
- Newcomers finding welcoming services and support for integration.
 - [Newcomers: Welcome to the Okanagan Regional Library!](#)
 - [New-to-BC: The Library Link for Newcomers](#)
 - [Immigrant Settlers Services Drop-in](#), Whistler Public Library
- Community members learning together, whatever their need and background.
 - [Quest Lecture Series](#), Squamish Public Library
 - [Tuesday Night Music Jam](#), McBride Public Library

- [LGBTQ2 and Allies Youth Group](#), Gibsons and District Public Library
- Families thriving through the joy of reading and attending programs that support childhood and family development.
 - [BC Summer Reading Club](#)
 - [Family Storytime](#) Creston Valley Public Library
 - [STEAM Afternoons](#), Invermere Public Library
 - [Northern Routes Discovery Pass](#), Prince George Public Library

The Creston Valley Public Library Board of Trustees urge the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to act on our shared understanding that provincial government financial support is critical to the successful continuance of public libraries and their positive impact on BC communities.

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. As a result, libraries are falling behind in their ability to meet growing needs. Since 2009 the public library community has asked the provincial government to provide funding for public libraries that at a minimum includes annual increases to account for inflation. Despite these repeated requests, for the past decade public libraries have received no increase to funding.

This year we are asking the provincial government for \$20 million for public libraries in 2020 as this will help address the chronic under-funding, lack of increases for inflation, and past government cuts.

Your attention to this urgent issue is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Joan Hedstrom
Board Chair, Creston Valley Public Library

CC:

Minister Fleming, Ministry of Education
Scott Hargrove, Chair, Association of BC Public Library Directors
Babs Kelly, Executive Director, BC Library Trustees Association
Annette DeFaveri, Executive Director, BC Library Association
Kevin Millsip, Executive Director, BC Libraries Cooperative