

June 20, 2019

Dear Select Committee on Finance:

I am writing to support the proposed increase in provincial funding for public libraries.

Since moving to Nelson from Ontario a decade ago, I have made great use of the city's public library, especially for Inter-library loans, but for other services as well. I am often in the Library (at least one a week) and have noticed how many other people are there as well. The Nelson Library is clearly a vital institution in this community. This is not surprising. The value of public libraries to public life has been often documented, most recently by Eric Klinenberg in his *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (2018); and much of what he says about the United States is just as applicable to public libraries in Canada. In Britain, where many counties and other local jurisdictions have cut back dramatically on funding for libraries, the dismal consequences for ordinary citizens are plain to see -- I've visited a few of these libraries -- even as people value what remains, which is much more robust in some regions than others.

Public libraries, in my view, are crucial services and community centres in contemporary society.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Malcolmson  
Nelson, BC