

*via email, September 25, 2019*

Dear Minister James, Minister Fleming, and Premier Horgan,

I've just watched the inspiring video developed by the BC Library Partners to promote the important work of libraries in communities. I've also read about their "\$20 million by 2020 campaign" to restore funding for public libraries. If you haven't already, please take the 4 minutes and 25 seconds it takes to watch their video and then do what you can to make this funding request a reality. <https://youtu.be/q132n0muT6w>

The thing that strikes me most is that it is **only \$20 million** that they are asking for. Give them more, if you can; there is so much opportunity to expand services. When you provide this funding, I would also suggest enshrining measures to protect against future cuts, and indexing your investment to account for inflation and capital costs and other factors, such as rapidly changing technology and the need for libraries to keep pace with digital tools, and bring these into libraries so we can all learn and try them.

I know there are so many provincial priorities to consider, but this is such a small amount of money for such an incredible impact, and for a service that is available to everyone.

There are so few things in our society that are completely free and open to anyone regardless of their age, income, geographical location and place in the world. The people who run and staff libraries are earnest and good, and make a transformative difference in the lives of so many people simply by being open and accessible and committed to sharing knowledge and resources for learning and enrichment.

I love libraries because they have given me so much. Growing up and going to university, libraries were always there for me. I'm a mom to two young kids who love the library. Libraries are a go-to space for our family, rain or shine. I wish ours in Victoria were open much earlier in the morning and on Sundays in the winter. I have a long list of online holds – we're on a tight budget taking care of our family and I love to read – this is how I can afford to read great books and lots of them. I'm a cultural worker, an artist and a writer - libraries give me a space to work that is filled with quiet, solitude and inspiration, as well as the materials and sources I need to do my work, whether it's hosting a meeting for a non-profit organization or working on a manuscript.

Here are links to information on provincial library funding in BC: <https://www.bclta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/BCPLP-Budget-Advocacy-Backgrounder.pdf>

And the great video: <https://youtu.be/q132n0muT6w>

Many thanks for all you have done and are doing. I am a resident in Carole James' riding and delighted with the progress being made by government since the NDP was elected.

Best regards,

Erica Mattson