

Beverly Oda  
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K0A 1A6

March 16, 2006

Dear Minister Oda:

Congratulations on your election to the House of Commons and I wish you success in the new Parliament. The Independent Media Arts Alliance fully supports the Canadian Arts Coalition in the request for more robust federal funding for the arts sector. Specifically, the Canadian Arts Coalition is seeking an increased investment of \$5 per Canadian for arts funding through the Canada Council for the Arts, the federal government's primary vehicle for delivering arts support.

In November, the federal government recognized the importance of the arts in the lives of Canadians by announcing that it would invest \$306 million in the Canada Council for the Arts – bringing its annual allocation to more than \$300 million. The call for increased funding was articulated by thousands of Canadians through the largest consortium of artists and arts organizations ever assembled in Canada, including wide support from city councils across the country. This is a decision that will benefit Canadians in every region and community and it is our understanding that it is fully funded in the federal budget plan.

Now as the government gets ready to set its mandate for the new Parliament, we are asking for your support in helping to advance the arts funding issue as a priority with your colleagues in Caucus. All public investment must meet the high standards of accountability, transparency and sustainability. We fully support these principles and are confident that this investment, through the Canada Council for the Arts, will meet these standards.

An increase of \$5 per Canadian to arts funding would mean:

- An enhanced **international profile** and better understanding of the diversity and richness of Canadian society;
- A **stronger economy** through support to thousands of small and medium-sized arts enterprises and to artists in every region of the country;
- The **enrichment** of all Canadians, as individuals and as part of our local and national communities;
- A more **inclusive society** which celebrates our cultures and languages;
- Vibrant **cities and communities**.

Canada's cultural sector makes a significant contribution to the country's gross domestic product, generating more than \$39 billion in economic activity and nearly 600,000 jobs. Given the important role of the arts to achieving the government's agenda of economic growth, nation-building and advancing Canada's values and interests internationally, we hope that you will agree with the merits of increased funding to the arts.

Thank you. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dorner, National Director  
Independent Media Arts Alliance  
Member of the Canadian Arts Coalition