



March 16, 2010  
Honourable Gordon Campbell  
Premier, Province of British Columbia  
PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Campbell,

On behalf of its 80 member organizations and 12,000 independent media artists and cultural workers across Canada, The Independent Media Arts Alliance regrets your government's decision to disregard its own Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services' recommendations on provincial arts funding. Your recently announced 2010-11 budget continues to ignore the importance of the creative sector, to the detriment of your own province's future development.

Regardless of reallocations and changes in program names, and different arrangements of gaming funds, the facts remain that at a minimum the British Columbia's public investment in the culture is now 32.4 percent lower than in its 2008-09 budget. The BC Arts Council has been cut 53 percent from 2008-09 levels, and BC Gaming Commission contributions to the arts have been cut 58 percent from 2008-09.

It must be underlined how shortsighted a strategy this is. Rather than building on the legacy and ample evidence of culture's importance in creating a more interesting and prosperous society, your policies are blunting your own citizens' efforts to make their province a better place, one that the world is drawn to. Gutting community-based arts organizations by making them ineligible for gaming grants that previously provided a significant portion of their revenues is counterproductive and misguided.

By destabilizing arts groups to the point that they can't operate effectively, decades of public investment and of work by community volunteers and professionals to build an engaging and richer society are effectively squandered. This creates a real disincentive for talented, creative artists, and cultural workers committed to building a vibrant, culturally diverse society to remain in British Columbia and contribute their efforts.

Already there are numerous anecdotal accounts of artists leaving British Columbia because of the climate of instability and disrespect that your government's policies of arts funding reductions have created. This puts British Columbia's arts and culture sector at a real disadvantage compared with other provincial jurisdictions that support community organizations to effectively leverage federal programs to build capacity, creativity and innovation in their towns and cities.

You should be concerned about this.

Given the political consensus represented by your own Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services on this matter, and the clearly expressed opposition of British Columbian's civil society, we encourage you to revise your current arts funding policy direction with a coherent, long-term vision of social and cultural development.

Sincerely,

Timothy Dallett  
Interim National Director

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