



**Independent
Media Arts Alliance**
Alliance des arts
médiatiques indépendants

May 1st, 2013

The Honourable James Moore
Minister of Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Moore,

The Budget Bill C-60 contains an amendment to the Financial Administration Act giving Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Cabinet the power to dictate collective bargaining, terms for salaries, benefits and working conditions for several crown corporations. This raises concerns in the media arts sector.

The arm's length relationship is so fundamentally important to the Canada Council for the Arts and other institutions included in the bill. This move greatly undermines the spirit and principle of the crown corporation, which while having a direct connection to the federal government is meant to be "shielded from constant government intervention and legislative oversight and thus generally enjoys greater freedom from direct political control than government departments."¹

Media artists and organizations stand strongly behind the Canada Council's fundamental values reinforced by the arm's length relationship to government. We believe that the Council must be given the freedom to develop policies and programs and make decisions without undue political pressure or influence. Independent media artists live and breathe "freedom of artistic expression from control or dominance by external forces such as governments and markets".²

Independent media artists and organizations contribute to the democratic process by giving voice to individuals within a diverse society for the benefit of all Canadians. While this bill appears to enable the government to control only certain administrative aspects of these institutions, we are adamantly opposed to any move that would open up the possibility for any political influence that would adversely impact the freedom and diversity of vision in artistic expression and social consciousness. The consequences of this will devastate the creative industries and subsequently Canadian culture at large.

In a modern democratic state, where freedom of expression is enshrined in its charter, the arm's length status of the key arts funding institutions in the country is essential to ensuring that freedom. We urge you to clarify which of the crown corporations are being impacted within the cultural sector, and to what extent it empowers the government to interfere with their operations, and how far will it go?

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dorner, National Director

Cc: Robert Sirman, Director of the Canada Council for the Arts; Pierre Nantel, NDP Heritage Critic;
Scott Simms, Liberal Party Heritage Critic

¹ Tupper, Allan, "Crown Corporation", The Canadian Encyclopedia (Historica-Dominion), <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/crown-corporation>

² The Canada Council's fundamental values, http://www.canadacouncil.ca/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=0&page_id=1830&query=arms%20length&hiword=LENGTHS%20LENGTHY%20arms%20length%20