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Sent: November-10-15 10:46 AM
To: melanie.joly@parl.gc.ca
Cc: Berthiaume, Guy (BAC/LAC); Christina Nichols
Subject: Introduction and meeting request / Canadian Council of Archives

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C. MP
Minister of Canadian Heritage
Canadian Heritage
25 Eddy Street
Gatineau, QC | K1A 0M5

Dear Minister Joly:

On behalf of the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA), I am writing to extend our congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Canadian Heritage and to encourage your leadership to rebuild our documentary heritage network. A strong documentary heritage network is vital to the access and preservation of Canada's collective memory and historic narratives, for future generations and for Canadians today, from coast to coast to coast.

The Canadian Council of Archives assists over 800 archives as they advance the preservation, organization, and accessibility of our country's rich archival heritage; we are a charitable organization established thirty years ago to foster collaboration and coordination throughout the Canadian Archival System. As the voice of Canada's archives, CCA's services are essential to the archival community. This community is composed not only of archivists and archives, but the institutions of which they are a part, as well as their many and varied users. These institutions encompass the small volunteer operated community archives and the largest provincial, territorial, university and municipal archives. Archives, and the materials they hold, are a unique and significant resource that supports the information needs of our economy, the development of our society, and the understanding of our history.

The archival community is eager and willing to play an active and significant role in the preparations for the upcoming 150th Anniversary of Confederation. We see this as an essential part of our mandate, as the caretakers and disseminators of our Canadian documentary heritage. However, we struggle now to prepare for these public service activities, since archives are desperately lacking the resources to keep up with the challenges of preserving, digitizing and making available to Canadians our irreplaceable information and heritage assets. This situation impairs the ability of Canadians to learn about their country and has created barriers for all types of users including teachers, students, researchers, writers, publishers, broadcasters, genealogists and members of the general public who need access to archival information for personal, professional or legal reasons.

In 2012, when the previous Government abruptly cancelled the National Archival Development Program (NADP) – a program that leveraged matching private and public sector investments, and that had positive reviews throughout all federal evaluations – cutting-edge work across the Canadian archival community ground to a halt, starved of the very support necessary to ensure archives kept pace with the changing needs of our society. The loss of the NADP immediately affected, either directly or indirectly, archival institutions in every province and territory, and the support mechanisms that were established have suffered greatly. For instance, the Réseau des services d'archives du Québec (RAQ) lost its desperately needed Archives Advisor within weeks of the cuts. Advisory services provided important and valued assistance to the large number of smaller archives throughout Québec. Across Canada, although the loss of advisory services did not reduce the number of institutions managing archival holdings, it reduced the number that are doing so using standards and protocols recognized as best practices.

Additionally, the capacity development funding CCA received through the NADP was also retroactively cancelled, crippling our ability to assist this country's archives. As a result, the Canadian Archival System remains in a fragile state, limited in its ability to move forward efficiently and cohesively in response to the digital environment.

In June 2015, Library and Archives Canada under the positive leadership of Dr. Guy Berthiaume, drew funds from its own already reduced budget to pilot a new contribution program, the Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP). This program was launched by LAC to help a broad array of heritage communities in Canada, not just archives. Despite having the same limited budget as the cancelled NADP, a wider range of heritage organizations (libraries, museums, etc ...) and associations are eligible to apply. This was an important and welcomed step in rebuilding LAC's relationship with the heritage community, however the scope of this program severely limits the funds available to archives. Eligibility for this program also excludes almost all medium to large archives in the country, and yet the first round of applications saw a demand that far surpassed the available funds. In this present context, it remains difficult for the archival community to progress in a way that will pay dividends for Canadians in the long-term.

Archives have something to offer all sectors of society, including many projects of the Government of Canada. Yet all archives have a backlog of holdings inaccessible to the public; the public who now expect 24/7 digital access, as highlighted by Mr. Trudeau in this 2014 interview on CBC's Q:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NyqNxpD7u8> (please see the 14.00 to 17.49 minute mark)

The only other program available to archives is a stream of Young Canada Works, specifically YCW for Heritage Institutions. For 2015-2016, the allotment for archives permitted funding of a shockingly low number of jobs (63) compared to the funding available to the museum stream (which funded 1322 jobs).

Canada's archival community has never shied away from meeting its significant responsibilities and undertaking the work required to preserve our documentary heritage, but our capacities

are finite. The Liberal Party's commitment to increase funding to Young Canada Works will be an important foundation upon which to begin building a capable future workforce. However, a significant gap will remain regarding the infrastructure required to support access to archival documentation, both analogue and digital, the latter being the public's choice of information format for the 21st Century.

With every week of delay in accessing funding similar to the former NADP, archival materials in communities across Canada remain inaccessible and at risk of loss. In addition, without resources to support the cost of collaboration, archives will remain laden with outdated standards, policies and processes (including those for preservation of digital records) that do not meet the current technologically-driven information needs of Canadians.

Recognizing the Government of Canada's commitment to transparency and knowledge sharing within the current environment, a critical opportunity is available to move rapidly so that the archival community can support your goals and enhance services to Canadians. In the past, the Federal Government's response to heritage has been to invest large sums of money within a narrow time frame for very narrow priorities. However, archives require a relatively modest amount of money over an extended period of time in order to generate the greatest results, and ensure that Canadians will have better access to a broad spectrum of documentary heritage and archival information.

Minister Joly, at your earliest opportunity I would appreciate meeting with you to explore pressing matters such as restoring or establishing a funding program designed specifically to support archives to advance progressively (such as is available to the museum community through the Museum Assistance Program) and to discuss the issues related to the information and record-keeping infrastructure across Canada – the infrastructure that is the foundation upon which we can strengthen our Canadian identity and enhance a culture of accountability for the benefit of future generations.

Once again, congratulations on your new position. The Canadian archival community stands eager and ready to support you and the priorities of the Government of Canada.

Sincerely,

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cc: Dr. Guy Berthiaume, Librarian and Archivist of Canada