



Canadian Conference
of the Arts
Conférence canadienne
des arts

Friday, May 6th, 2005

Dear Rt. Hon. Paul Martin, Hon. Stephen Harper, Gilles Duceppe, and Hon. Jack Layton

On February 23rd, the 2005 Federal Budget announced a historic funding commitment for Canada's arts, culture, and heritage sector, in the form of the proposed renewal of the "Tomorrow Starts Today" (TST) program through to March 2010.

The renewal of TST is an issue the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), together with its hundreds of arts, culture, and heritage member organizations from all across this country, has been committed to for many years now. Those in the sector worked hard to impress upon their MPs, Ministers, and other decision makers, the profound importance of the TST program as the foundation on which many cultural initiatives, which benefit all Canadians, their sense of identity and their quality of life, can be built upon and sustained.

The TST investment is *extremely* significant for the sector in a number of ways, including: promoting sustainability and capacity building; adding much needed funding to existing programs, such as those that assist Canada's national training institutions, the book publishing industry, and the Canada Music Fund; providing monies for the Arts Presentation Canada program, which promotes access to and participation in Canada's cultural life and nurtures venues for artists in different regions and traditions; funds to allow arts venues to update their facilities with new technology; and promotion of the Trade Routes program for cultural exports. TST funding has also permitted the development of new programs, such as Cultural Capitals of Canada, an incentive for municipalities to invest in culture in their communities and to develop municipal cultural policies. Furthermore, TST provides much needed increases in funding to key national cultural agencies and institutions, including the Canada Council for the Arts and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

As you might understand, the CCA is distressed that this funding commitment, which would positively impact so many Canadians, could be jeopardized by an early federal election call. CCA appeals to the four of you, as the leaders of Canada's major political parties, to work together to ensure that key aspects of the federal budget, such as TST, are passed in the coming weeks. CCA also wants to respectfully remind you that in the past months, all federal parties have publicly endorsed the need for, and the importance of, stable, multi-year funding for Canada's arts, culture, and heritage sector.

The CCA supports the "People Before Politics" (www.peoplebeforepolitics.ca) campaign and asks you to work collaboratively to ensure that the federal budget that our members and member organizations want, *that Canadians want*, is passed before another election. The current minority Parliament, in which you all play integral roles, still has much work to do and CCA is eager for you to carry out your duties and to support your efforts.

Sincerely,

Jean Malavoy
National Director, Canadian Conference of the Arts

c.c. Hon. Ralph Goodale, Minister of Finance
Hon. Liza Frulla, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women
Hon. Sarmite Bulte, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Marlene Catterall, Chair, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage
Bev Oda, Conservative Critic, Canadian Heritage
Maka Kotto, Bloc Quebecois Critic, Canadian Heritage
Charlie Angus, New Democratic Party Critic, Canadian Heritage