

Monday, May 9th, 2005

Dear Jean Malavoy,

In your most recent CCA Bulletin, you state that the support for the cultural industries may be in jeopardy if the Liberal government's budget does not pass and you have endorsed a public campaign "People Before Politics".

I want to be clear that the Conservative Party will honour all commitments made in the budget to the cultural industries even if the budget is not passed. And regarding your concern on infrastructure funding, in an open letter, dated May 6, 2005, to Canadian municipalities Stephen Harper has stated, "I want to reassure municipal representatives across Canada that even if this budget is not passed, there is no risk whatsoever to promised infrastructure funding under a Conservative government."

And he goes on to say, "...this funding will be available in the current fiscal year."

You point out "much of last year was spent in advocacy efforts in order to gain unanimous support from all of Canada's federal political parties for the renewal and extension of TST." As you know I was the member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage who made the motion asking the Minister indicate to the cultural community of her intentions to renew "Tomorrow Starts Today" before the Christmas break. In a matter of days she did so.

I did this on behalf of the Conservative Party that does not believe it is reasonable to keep the entire cultural community in limbo when planning for the upcoming year or years is taking place. This, I respectfully suggest, is a "bleak scenario". In our discussions I have clearly stated it would be our intention to eliminate the tortuous process of having to lobby government for sustainable needed funding for the arts annually.

The Conservative Party Policy Declaration, adopted at our policy convention in Montreal, Section 93 entitled Arts and Culture reads as follows:

- i) The Conservative Party supports arts, culture and the diverse heritage of Canada. Recognition that language is an integral part of one's culture and heritage should form the basis for decision making relating to its cultural and artistic community. While recognizing Canada's diverse culture and shared history, the Conservative Party will work to strengthen opportunities and accessibility in both the domestic and international markets for our creative works.
- ii) The Conservative Party believes that government support should be linked to accountability, transparency and sustainability. A review of programs and policies will ensure that they effectively meet their objectives, are based on merit, and remove political involvement from

the process. Arts, culture and heritage make a substantial contribution Canadian society and in a positive way, affect the quality of life of many Canadians. A Conservative government will, through the tax system and other means, support charitable giving by individuals and corporations to the arts and cultural community in order that its work can be expanded.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate statements I made in a speech at our policy convention. *“Conservatives take pride and share in the success of every Canadian who succeeds in their chosen field – and so it should be in the arts. We have to change the Liberal culture of continual subsidies and hand-outs to a new vision..... All Canadians can have confidence that Conservatives value the arts, culture and heritage of every community and region across this land.....We can do it – starting with strong policies, cultural programs and initiatives.....we will not only subsidize creators with hand outs, but open new doors for long term growth and opportunity....and Canadians will see that Conservatives do not regard arts and culture as just nice to have, but as part of Canada’s economy, recognizing it contributes \$26 billion to our GDP and employs over 570,000 Canadians...I know that supporting arts and culture with a new vision will show Canadians that Conservatives know what Canadians value.”*

I look forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

Bev Oda, MP
Official Opposition Critic for Canadian Heritage