



September 8, 2006

Federal-Provincial Relations and Social Policy Branch
Consultation on restoring Fiscal Balance in Canada
Department of Finance Canada
140 O'Connor Street
15th Floor, East Tower
L'Esplanade Laurier
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G5

RE: Consultations on Immediate and Long-Term Funding Support for Infrastructure

The Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) would like to intervene on issues of infrastructure within the consultation process launched by the federal government concerning fiscal balance.

The CCA is the national forum for the arts and cultural sector in Canada. For over sixty years, the CCA has represented the interests of Canadian artists, creators and arts professionals in matters of cultural policy. The CCA respects and represents their fundamental role in building and maintaining a creative, dynamic, and civil society. An authority, providing research, analysis and consultation on public policy in arts and culture, the CCA fosters informed debates and collective action within the arts and cultural community and the creative industries in Canada.

Canada's quality of life and economic competitiveness is supported by public infrastructures provided by all three orders of government and by the private sector. This includes infrastructures under federal responsibility (e.g. railways, marine facilities, airports, air navigation systems, etc.) and infrastructures owned by provinces, territories, and municipalities (e.g. highways, local roads, water and sewage, urban transit, culture and recreation, etc.).

The May 2 2006 Speech from the Throne provided direction for future measures in transport, infrastructure and communities. In particular, the Government of Canada has committed to:

- Promoting a more competitive, productive economy;
- Improving the quality of life in Canada's communities;
- Achieving tangible improvements in the environment; and
- Ensuring transparency and accountability to Canadians.

While the CCA agrees with and supports all four of the Government's commitments to infrastructures and communities, we are invested most particularly in seeing tangible federal advancements with respect to this second commitment, and how it inter-relates with Canada's arts and culture.

In several communities across the country, many not-for-profit arts groups and organizations are currently facing crisis situations in relation to their cultural facilities. The current infrastructures related to physical spaces for the arts is tenuous. Many arts groups and organizations move into

less expensive parts of towns and cities, seeking affordable spaces in vacated, formerly industrial buildings, only to see the neighbourhood become popular and rents increase so that they must move again. One can point to several instances where arts and cultural organizations have been the root cause of the sudden growth and revitalization of neighbourhoods, only to be forced later on to leave because they cannot afford to operate in those neighbourhoods anymore!

Arts groups need support in various ways to allow them to establish permanent venues for the creation and presentation of art works, be they theatrical plays, exhibitions of visual arts, musical performances, or cutting edge screenings of film and video. The Cultural Spaces Canada component of the Department of Canadian Heritage's "Tomorrow Starts Today" provides some support for venues, but it is the CCA's position that another important complementary method would be increasing capital programs to enable not-for-profit arts and culture organizations to purchase buildings.

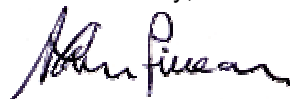
The ability for artist-run organizations of all sizes to purchase cultural spaces would enable them to build equity, to gain long-term stability in order to make long-standing relationships with their communities, to develop community educational programs, and to invest additional funds to enhance the quality of these cultural spaces' artistic programming. These not-for-profit groups bring immeasurable value to their surroundings and are key players in city revitalization projects. As has been amply documented in recent years, they contribute greatly to the quality of life and to the economic prosperity of our communities large and small.

Just this past June 2006, the Prime Minister's External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities filed its final report with the PMO. Their brief, entitled "From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building a Stronger Future For All Canadians", emphasizes the strong role the federal government must play in providing increased, adequate fiscal and policy support for arts and culture infrastructure. One of their Committee's key recommendations reads as follows:

"The Committee therefore recommends that the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, together with the private sector, establish and endow a not-for-profit Culture in Place Foundation. This foundation would build on international and national best practices in cultural strategies for cities and communities that seek to engage all citizens and that have long-term economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits. The foundation would integrate and strengthen existing efforts such as the national Cultural Capitals of Canada program and the municipally based Creative City Network. With the aim of stimulating policies and programs in the arts, sports and other cultural fields in all provinces and territories, the foundation would act as a catalyst in building capacity for culture and cultural planning and foster best practices and innovation in communities of all sizes."

The CCA urges the Government to live up to its necessary leadership role in supporting Canadian culture. We therefore expect that the Government will consider the critical role that arts and culture places in your deliberations related to infrastructures in Canada's cities and communities.

Yours sincerely,



Alain Pineau
National Director