



Ottawa, November 23, 2006

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Minister
Culture Youth and Recreation
Rm. 306, Legislative Buildings
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK, S4S 0B3

Dear Minister Hagel:

Status of the artist issues have long been an ongoing policy issue for the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA). We applaud the steps that the Government of Saskatchewan has taken to bring about concrete legislation and programs. In particular, the CCA welcomes the final Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Status of the Artist (MACSA). The Government's Report makes a firm commitment to advancing equity for artist's social and economic conditions, a long standing quest of the artistic and cultural community across the whole country. Status of the Artist legislation and programs are indeed critical elements of an overarching arts policy for Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Status Act acknowledges artists' contribution to the health and viability of our communities. The MACSA Report makes this point clearly and it echoes and substantiates the recommendations of the 1993 Minister's Committee. The recognition of the contributions made by artists to the life of the province and increasing the ability of artists to earn an improved living standard are major steps forward.

The CCA supports many of MACSA's recommendations including statutory requirements for written contracts, the presumption of self-employment designation, the protection from action under the Competition Act, and a clear definition of professional artist.

The CCA also encourages the Saskatchewan provincial government to take action on the exemption of provincial arts grants and not defer this issue to a working group for further investigation. Furthermore, we are encouraged by the fact that MACSA places a priority on introducing income averaging and tax exemption for grant and royalty income for artists and creators.

The CCA also supports MACSA's discussions of arts education. We consider that arts education, as addressed in the MACSA Report, is an issue of crucial national importance. The CCA sees arts education funding and development as a substantive element in advancing status issues.

The CCA is appreciative of the fact that the Report supports mandatory collective bargaining, although some of our member organizations, particularly performing arts unions, have brought to your attention concerns with some elements of the collective bargaining proposals included in the Report. There is a

concern that MACSA's proposals do not adequately address the issue of national agreements already in place. A critical issue for artists' associations and unions is to prevent a producer who belongs to an established producers' association, and who is party to a national scale agreement, from separating itself from the national group and agreement, therefore forcing a union or artists' association to bargain a new agreement which could undercut the national agreement.

The CCA would also like to point out that a sectoral bargaining approach is critical for artists and is a key element in both the federal and Quebec Status of the artist legislation. Without sectoral certification, for both artists and producers, it would be necessary to certify one employer at a time, which is impossible given the short duration of many engagements or presentations. The process delineated in the Report is much too cumbersome and truly expensive and will prove beyond the means of most artists associations and probably most producers.

The CCA hopes you will consider its member organizations' views and recommends that when proceeding with public consultations on the proposed legislation, you work together with the arts community, both with Saskatchewan and national artistic and cultural organizations who have members in the province, to cooperatively resolve any potentially problematic issues. We certainly look forward to the tabling of the legislation and may take the liberty of commenting on it.

In creating legislation that recognizes the imperative role artists play in the culture and economy of the province, the Government of Saskatchewan will advance artists' social and economic lives. Saskatchewan will become the second province (and the first in English Canada) to substantially address Status issues and CCA believes Saskatchewan will provide a leadership example to the rest of Canada.

Sincerely,



Alain Pineau
National Director
Canadian Conference of the Arts

cc. Barbara MacLean
Deputy Minister, CYR

Dawn Martin,
Executive Director
Culture and Heritage, CYR