



Ottawa, Wednesday, June 28, 2006

The Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4

Dear Senator:

The Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) is the country's largest, most senior arts advocacy and cultural policy development organization. Through its network of member organizations and individuals, the CCA represents hundreds of thousands of Canadian artists, arts and culture professionals, and their supporters.

On June 22, Members of the House of Commons approved the draft legislation for Bill C-2, the Federal Accountability Act, sending it to the Upper Chamber for further review. The CCA fully supports the objectives of this legislation to make government more accountable for its management of public finances and public affairs. The legislation is of key importance to the Canadians and we strongly encourage you and your colleagues to give the legislation serious study and consideration before approving it.

The CCA has worked with successive Governments and Parliaments for over 60 years. Our organization continues to participate in numerous studies, task forces, and appears regularly before Parliamentary committees in the House and in the Senate. The CCA has engaged the democratic process and works in a non-partisan manner to advance the interests of the Canadian arts and culture sector. We fear that this legislation could seriously impede the free flow of ideas and perspectives central to the public policy development process. We are also concerned that the legislation further muddies the waters around the definition of a lobbyist and that of a participant in an open public policy development process. It would also impose an additional unnecessary burden on organizations like ours whose role is to feed the public debate on important policy issues rather than to promote limited self interests.

It is the hope of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Conference of the Arts that you and your colleagues will ensure that this important legislation does not exacerbate Canada's "democratic deficit" by limiting the participation of organizations such as ours in the business of the common good. Bill C-2 is an incredibly complex piece of draft legislation that has been pieced together in a very short time frame, and yet it could seriously imperil the free flow of ideas and perspectives essential to Canada's public policy making process.

Our Board has also suggested that the Senate may usefully extract from the Government a commitment that when the regulations associated with this legislation are drafted that this be a public process and open to further commentary from interested parties. It may be the best way to avoid unforeseen damage to the public policy interests of Canadians and their government.

We look forward to the engagement of the Senate on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Alain Pineau  
National Director