



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

The Honourable Pascale St-Onge  
Minister of Canadian Heritage

March 14, 2024

RE: Urgent Need to Increase Public Arts Funding and Address Regional Inequities

Dear Minister St-Onge,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing you regarding the urgent need to increase public funding for the arts, and to address long-standing inequities in how funds are allocated across the country, including in Waterloo Region.

The arts play a pivotal role in our society, enriching our lives, fostering creativity, promoting cultural diversity, and providing a critical outlet for activism. However, artists and arts organizations across the country, including in Waterloo Region, are grappling with significant financial challenges amidst often reduced government funding.

This is made worse by regional inequities in federal funding: according to public data from the Canada Council for the Arts for 2022-23, the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo area received a mere \$3.39 per capita in funding. In contrast, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver received an average of \$18.30 per capita, over five times the amount received by the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo area.

To address both these issues, we call for you to:

- 1. Invest an additional \$140 million to permanently to return to the Canada Council for the Arts' 2021 granting budget of \$500 million.** This would bolster artistic excellence and innovation across Canada, as called for by the Canadian Arts Coalition and the Canadian Dance Assembly to significantly alleviate the funding shortfall in the arts sector.

**2. Apply the Regional Development Agency (RDA) model to the Canada Council for the Arts** to address regional disparities in arts funding, by amending the *Canada Council for the Arts Act* to mandate the use of an RDA model. The RDA model has demonstrated success in other areas of government funding and would serve to ensure a more equitable geographic distribution of resources.

Taken together, these calls would contribute not only to the vibrancy of the arts in Canada but also to ensure more equitable opportunities for all regions to enrich the cultural fabric of the nation.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further. Thanks for the work you do in service of Canadians.

Sincerely,



Mike Morrice,  
MP for Kitchener Centre



Elizabeth May, MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands  
Leader of the Green Party of Canada

Cc: Taleeb Noormohamed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage

Lynne Barna, President, K-W Musical Productions  
Isabel Cisterna, Artistic Director, Neruda Arts  
Carolyn Galvin, President, Kitchener-Waterloo Little Theatre  
Marinus (Martin) de Groot, Former Executive Director, Waterloo Regional Arts Council  
Joe Henning, Interim General Manager, The Centre in the Square  
Denis Longchamps, Director, Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery  
Suzanne Luke, University Art Curator, Wilfrid Laurier University  
Shirley Madill, Executive Director, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery  
Hiyam Mahrat, General Manager, MT Space  
David Marskell, Chief Executive Officer, THEMUSEUM  
Lisa O'Connell, Artistic Director, Pat the Dog Theatre Creation  
Lily Schumacher, President, The Registry Theatre  
Conan Stark, Art Department Head, Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute  
Isabella Stefanescu, Artistic Producer, Inter Arts Matrix  
Caitlin Sutherland, Director, Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener and Area  
Sam Verteniuk, Executive Director, The Registry Theatre  
Matt White, Co-Founder & Artistic Director, Green Light Arts