

Mr. Erin O'Toole
Conservative Party of Canada
1720-130 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
(cc: erin.otoole@parl.gc.ca)

Ottawa, September 2, 2021

Dear Mr. O'Toole,

Museums are transformative. They are windows on our past, our present and future. They provide people with safe places to reflect and bring us together while celebrating our differences. They stimulate creativity, spur discovery, and help make our communities more attractive places to live, work, and visit.

From the awakening of a national consciousness based on Indigenous truths rather than colonial myths, to the need to reinvent an economy and lifestyle fueled by plentiful carbon, the shifting sands of change challenge our sense of what it means to be Canadian and demand reconciliation not only between peoples, but with our own sense of being.

In the midst of this uncertainty and upheaval, museums – among the institutions most trusted by Canadians – provide the solid ground from which, together, we can map a way forward.

As representatives of over 2000 museum and heritage institutions of every size in every province and territory, we urge you, in this time of national decision, to commit to work with us to develop policies adapted to the unique place and role of museums in modern Canadian society.

A uniquely important but vulnerable sector

The pandemic demonstrated the economic vulnerability of many Canadian museum and heritage institutions. Some had to shut down, most had to reduce services and lay off talented and committed staff. But museums also answered the call. Supported by federal pandemic assistance programs, they remained focused on the health and safety of their staff and communities while providing much-needed educational opportunities for families.

While the pandemic served to highlight the importance of a responsive federal partner in times of crisis, it also highlighted the need to build the resiliency and adaptability of the sector, if it is to fulfil its unique and important role.

The world museums help explain is changing ever more rapidly. To remain relevant and accessible, they need predictable, long-term sources of funding. Application and project-based funding – the backbone of Canada's current museums policy – while important, only serves to promote short-term solutions.

Updating Canada's museums policy

This is why we are calling for an update to Canada's 30-year-old national museum policy.

A refreshed national museum policy will aim to preserve and maximize our ability to tell Canada's story. It will allow for further digitization of collections and empower greater collaboration and sharing of Canada's cultural heritage.

We want to establish a long-term partnership with government that leverages and strengthens the social, economic, and cultural value of museums. A policy framework supported by predictable long-term funding is essential to making this happen.

An effective national museum policy will focus on protecting, celebrating, and advancing Canada's cultural heritage, ensure the financial sustainability of the sector, encourage long-term planning, and help promote key Canadian values like environmental sustainability, truth and reconciliation, and unity in diversity.

Sharing your vision for museums and your vision for Canada

We have created a [short questionnaire](#) that we invite you to complete and return to us no later than September 13. Your vision for Canada's museums, and your vision for Canada will be shared with all our members as well as with Canadians via communique on September 14.

We look forward to hearing from you, and to working with you.

Sincerely,



Massimo Bergamini
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Museums Association



Ryan Hunt
Executive Director
BC Museums Association



Lianne Maitland
Executive Director
Heritage Yukon



Jennifer Forsyth
Executive Director
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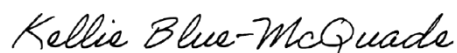


Wendy Fitch
Executive Director
Museums Association of Saskatchewan

(signed digitally)



Monique Brandt
Executive Director
Association of Manitoba Museums



Kellie Blue-McQuade
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