

Subject: FW: CELA/NNELS Funding Advocacy Update

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Good afternoon,

I'm happy to report that there was a meeting Monday between Minister Qualtrough and representatives from CELA and NNELS, and the federal government issued this press release yesterday: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2021/03/announcement-of-a-funding-related-to-alternate-format-materials-and-print-disabilities.html>

This was followed by CELA and NNELS releasing the following statement acknowledging the meeting and expressing appreciation to Minister Qualtrough and the organizations that supported the advocacy effort: <https://nnels.ca/cela-and-nnels-joint-response-minister-qualtrough%E2%80%99s-announcement>

Thank you for your fast response and commitment to providing accessible reading materials to the visually impaired and print disabled. The advocacy has clearly succeeded in averting the immediate threat to this funding. While the funding cut has been reversed for this year, the long term future of the funding remains in question. As a result, the advocacy campaign is shifting focus to the long term sustainability of the funding. Letters of support from City Councils will be important. With that in mind, I have included a updated draft motion with this new goal in mind:

<Draft Motion Begins>

WHEREAS:

The Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL), and almost all libraries in Canada, currently provide specialized services for the visually impaired and print disabled through the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and the National Network for Equitable Library Services (NNELS).

AND WHEREAS:

Both agencies are engaged in accessible book production and collectively receive \$4 million in annual federal funding to support this needed service.

AND WHEREAS:

The federal government has announced that they are restoring the 2021 funding cut to these services previously announced in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement, but have not committed to providing sustainable funding for these services past 2021.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the <municipality> send letters to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, and our local Members of Parliament <insert names here>, requesting sustainable funding for CELA and NNELS to support the continued production of accessible reading materials.

<Draft Motion Ends>

Thank you again for your support of FVRL and these important services. As always, it is greatly appreciated!

Scott Hargrove, Chief Executive Officer

Fraser Valley Regional Library

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From: Scott Hargrove <shargrove@fvrl.bc.ca>

Sent: Friday, March 26, 2021 4:04 PM

Subject: Draft CELA/NNELS Advocacy Letter

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon,

A few of you have asked me for a draft letter for your Council to endorse and send to Minister Qualtrough, Minister Freeland, and your local MP to support the CELA/NNELS advocacy effort for sustainable federal funding. As I noted in previous updates, the funding cut for this year has already been reversed, but the funding for subsequent years is still in question. My colleagues from CELA, NNELS, the BC Libraries Cooperative and various library associations have developed the following draft letter (text below my signature) to serve this purpose. If you have any questions about it, please contact me at your convenience, and I'll do my best to help.

Thanks again for your support, and have a lovely weekend!

Scott

Scott Hargrove, Chief Executive Officer

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<Draft Letter Begins>

Dear <Minister or MP>,

Following a recent meeting between Minister Qualtrough, CELA, and NNELS, we understand the federal government announced it would not proceed with the anticipated cuts for funding for accessible book production for the 2021-2022 budget year. We thank Minister Qualtrough for her assistance and are grateful for the one year reprieve this funding offers people who rely on this essential public service.

CELA, NNELS and their colleagues in the publishing industry all believe the idea of "born accessible" publishing is a laudable goal, and are working together to increase the amount of material that can be produced this way. Kate Edwards, Executive Director of the Association of Canadian Publishers says "CELA and NNELS are valued partners to the Canadian publishing industry as we implement strategies to ensure that our books are born accessible. We know that continued progress in this area depends on developing sustainable models that include partners in all parts of that ecosystem, and look forward to continuing to work with government, NNELS and CELA in support of this goal."

We are asking Minister Qualtrough to work with NNELS and CELA to develop a longer term strategy and sustainable federal funding solution for accessible book production and distribution in Canada. We are also seeking her assurance to address the government's planned funding cuts to this work for future years, working together with NNELS and CELA to develop a long term funding strategy to meet the needs of the 1 in 10 people with print disabilities.

We will be watching the progress of discussions on this important issue.

Sincerely, <Mayor and Council>

</Draft Letter Ends>