



Atlantic Provinces Library Association
c/o School of Information Management
Faculty of Management, Dalhousie University
Kenneth C. Rowe Management Building
6100 University Avenue Halifax, NS B3H 3J5

March 6, 2026

Open Letter Regarding Proposed Provincial Budget Cuts in Nova Scotia

Dear Premier Houston,

The news of the impending cuts, specifically towards arts and culture, to the Nova Scotia provincial budget was met with distress and disbelief by the members of our association. APLA represents approximately 400 library workers and library supporters across the Atlantic region. I am writing on their behalf to ask that you reconsider the proposed cuts to these sectors that are not only foundational for the community, but are critical to our regional economy.

The importance of arts and culture in our province cannot be overstated. Art programs and cultural organizations are crucial to lifelong learning and skills development for Nova Scotians of all ages. The loss of community arts programming, especially youth-focused education initiatives, will narrow access to creative learning opportunities across the province. Beyond the immediate impact on these sectors, these cuts threaten long-term negative impacts on cultural life, social cohesion and the broader economy of Nova Scotia.

The consequences of these cuts will be felt immediately in our libraries. All libraries - public, academic, special - rely on a vibrant local publishing ecosystem to build collections that reflect Nova Scotian voices and stories. Reductions to publishing grants and cultural funding weaken the very supply chain that sustains literacy, local authorship, and access to diverse Canadian content in our communities. While the Minister of Community, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage stated that "library funding was not cut", the elimination of emergency bridge funding effectively reduces operational capacity, particularly for rural and regional libraries already managing rising costs of library materials. For many communities, even modest funding losses translate into reduced hours, fewer programs, delayed acquisitions, and staffing shortages. Libraries and arts organizations operate in partnership; when cultural programming shrinks, libraries are left to absorb increased demand with fewer resources.



While we acknowledge the fiscal pressures facing the province, it is difficult to accept that reductions to arts funding represent prudent long-term solutions. Cost savings achieved through deep cuts - specifically to arts and culture, are offset by broader economic and social consequences. The question must be asked: will the projected savings outweigh the cultural vibrance and energy of local publishers, theatres, galleries, and festivals? Youth will lose access to creative and educational opportunities. Emerging writers and artists may be forced to leave the province in search of sustainable support. The arts sector contributes significant GDP and supports thousands of jobs across Nova Scotia. Weakening this sector undermines not only Nova Scotia's cultural vibrancy but economic adaptability.

The concerns we raise here are shared widely across the sectors we help to promote, and the communities we serve. We respectfully urge you to reconsider these proposed cuts, recognizing the profound and lasting impact they would have on individuals, artists, organizations and the broader economy of Nova Scotia. We thank you for your attention to this matter and remain ready to engage in constructive dialogue toward a resolution.

Sincerely,

Terri Winchcombe

APLA President

CC: Members of the Nova Scotia Legislature;

Hon. Dave Ritcey, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage & Minister of Gaelic Affairs