

Book and Periodical Council

Celebrating 40 Years

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June 8, 2016

The Honourable Dwight Ball, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Confederation Building
8th Floor, East Block
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Premier Ball:

In April, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador pledged to raise the sales tax on most books by 10% and close more than half of the libraries in the province.

The sales tax on most books will rise to 15% on January 1, 2017, and 54 libraries—many in rural areas—will close in the next two years.

Canada's Book and Periodical Council (BPC) believes that the combination of these two actions will hurt more than help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our members expect the following effects:

- a decline in revenue for booksellers, publishers and authors
- a decline in the number of books published in the province
- the loss of \$1 million in annual funding for the library board
- the loss of 64 library jobs
- the reduction of access to books and libraries for children and seniors
- the denial of public access to libraries and the Internet in rural areas
- the persistence of illiteracy among poorer and more isolated citizens

Shifting responsibility for funding the 54 affected public libraries from the province to the municipalities might keep some libraries open. But this idea will work only if the municipalities have and are willing to spend the extra money.

Claiming that 85% of the province's people will be able to drive to a public library within 30 minutes sounds reassuring. But the claim provides no help to the 15% of people who live farther away or who can't use a vehicle to get to a local library.

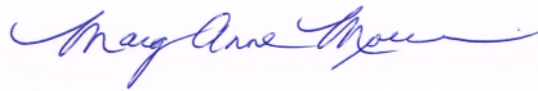
“Writers matter,” says Joan Clark, an award-winning writer in St. John’s, “because they provide us with destinations, with places and people we would otherwise never know.” If your government closes 54 libraries and adds a 10% sales tax on most books, thousands of people in your province won’t get to those destinations or meet those people.

We believe that widespread access to public libraries and modestly priced books contributes to improved literacy rates, academic success, economic growth, a better-informed society and a healthier democracy. We urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to abolish the new 10% sales tax on books and find ways to keep all of the province’s public libraries open.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Fysh
Chair, Book and Periodical Council



Marg Anne Morrison
Chair, Freedom of Expression Committee

The Book and Periodical Council is the umbrella organization for Canadian associations that are or whose members are primarily involved with the writing, editing, translating, publishing, producing, distributing, lending, marketing, reading and selling of written words.

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