

May 6, 2016

The Honourable Michael Coteau
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games
9th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Dear Minister Coteau,

We are writing to you at this time to state our support for issues raised recently by the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) pertaining to news that the Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF) core budget for 2016-2017 has been reduced by \$25 million dollars.

PASO-OPSA is a coalition of 26 provincial arts service organizations that strives to strengthen the environment for the individuals and institutions that create and disseminate the arts in this province and for public access to the arts. We have operated on the principle of voluntary contributions of time and travel from Coalition member organizations since 2007. Collective memberships in the coalition are made up of individual artists as well as the performance and exhibition organizations that create and support artistic expression.

The 2016-2017 budget released on Feb 25, 2016 noted that the Ontario Trillium Foundation's allocation remained at the previous year's level of \$115 million. However Expenditure Estimates released the last week of March note that the Foundation's allocation is in fact \$90 million with \$25 million re-allocated to projects to support Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017.

Encompassing a diversity of disciplines, our coalition's various memberships depend significantly on funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to support activities in arts hubs across the province, building strong and vibrant communities but, most importantly, to upgrade equipment as well as meet the challenges of working in an increasingly digital environment. The cancellation of Ontario Trillium Foundation's capital grant round so close to the expected deadline generated concern for our members who had invested considerable staff time and resources in preparing applications. The announcement earlier this month of an expanded community capital grant program while welcome leaves some doubt as to whether a capital program can be launched that would serve all but "shovel ready" projects which would not serve the majority of non-profit organizations.

We are also concerned that this \$90 million allocation would become the new "base" for the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Reassurance from your office that this would not be the case would be appreciated.

We strongly urge you to reinstate the Ontario Trillium Foundation's operating budget to \$115 million, as announced by Minister Sousa in the 2016-2017 budget and presented to the Ontario Legislature.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Submitted by:

PASO-OPSA Coalition 2016

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