

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATIONS WRITE PARTY LEADERS, INSIST ON PRIORITIZING THE SECTOR

OTTAWA, October 8, 2019 — National, provincial and territorial museums associations sent joint letters today to the leaders of political parties, highlighting the importance of museums and seeking the parties' positions on critical questions for the sector.

Party Leaders were asked to share their election commitments for the museum and heritage sector; their views on the importance and role of museums; and, if elected, how they intend to respond to recommendations made by the museum community. The associations intend to make the parties' responses public.

"Museums play an increasingly important role in today's society. They function as important social agents, with the capacity to unite us and defend our common good," said Dr. Vanda Vitali, Executive Director of the Canadian Museums Association.

"Without a greater commitment to museums and without critical changes to museum policy and approaches to funding, Canada's museums, large and small, are at risk of not being able to fulfil their much-needed role in our communities.

The associations are encouraging concrete action on recommendations in *Moving Forward — Towards a Stronger Canadian Museum Sector*, a report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. These include:

- A review and modernization of the National Museum Policy, last updated close to 30 years ago
- A review of funding streams for museums with the goal of establishing a more sustainable funding system, to help ensure more aspects of museum operations are supported
- An expansion of the Museums Assistance Program to enable an investment beyond collections-based activities
- A simplification of the funding application process for museums, especially for small museums, which have important stories to tell and for whom the current process may present barriers

Canadians and the sector clearly deserve a modern, up-to-date museum policy and approach reflecting the issues and needs of the 21st Century. Canada boasts some 2700 museums, cultural heritage and science-related centres. In 2015, Canadian museums annually accounted for over \$2.5 billion in revenue - an increase of 23% since 2011. Supporting museums is a smart investment, impacting economic and cultural growth. A 2017 survey indicates that there are some 19,000 employees in museums and art galleries and some 65,000 volunteers who worked over 4.3 million hours. Daily visitor-ship to Canadian museums has increased 34% since 2011. Annual attendance at all museums reached 31.5 million in-person visits in 2017, with a 75% increase in online visits to museums since 2011, to reach 89.5 million overall online visits. In order to strengthen the contributions of museums to communities, education and cultural tourism further investment is needed.

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Canada's museum associations

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British Columbia
Museums
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Inuit Heritage Trust

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Association of Nova
Scotia Museums

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Association of
Saskatchewan

Yukon Historical
and Museums
Association