Mr. Gary Schellenberger

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

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Dear Mr. Schellenberger:

I would like to thank the Committee for its work on this review and wish to express my appreciation to all of those who appeared before the Committee to share their views on Strategic Review reallocations that affected arts and culture programs.

In Budget 2007, our Government committed to ensure every dollar spent delivers results for Canadian taxpayers. A new Expenditure Management System was introduced that requires all Federal departments and agencies to undertake a Strategic Review of their programs and spending and identify opportunities for reallocations. As a result, 17 departments and agencies undertook Strategic Reviews in 2007-2008. This included both the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Strategic reviews help to ensure that all Government programs: are effective and efficient; meet the priorities of Canadians; are aligned with federal responsibilities; and provide value for money. All programs are reviewed using the following criteria: public interest; alternative delivery mode; opportunities for new or better partnerships; federal government role; efficiency; affordability.

Upon completion of the assessments, departments and agencies put forward proposals representing 5% of their direct program spending to be reallocated to priorities, either within their organization or across Government. This valuable public management process involves all areas of Government. It allows all Federal Departments and Agencies to ensure their programs deliver the best possible results to all Canadians.

It is important to emphasize that only 3.4% of the Department of Canadian Heritage’s spending was reallocated. This is a relatively small amount of the more than two billion dollars the Government of Canada spends each year on arts, culture and heritage through the Department of Canadian Heritage and Portfolio. Programs affected were those that were not effectively meeting objectives, or had attained their original objectives. Continuing these programs was simply not efficient or effective spending. Our Government is committed to both investing in arts and culture and to spending in an efficient and responsible manner. Strategic Reviews help us deliver on this commitment.

Our Government continues to move forward with effective investments in arts and culture in Canada. During this last year we have made more than one billion dollars in funding announcements. This includes both new and renewed funding. In late June, we announced renewed investments in the arts totalling $504 million over five years. This is in addition to the $540 million dollars in new and renewed investments for arts, culture, heritage and associated tourism initiatives across government over the next two years that we announced in
Canada’s Economic Action Plan earlier in the year. Furthermore, we have established a historical precedent by providing the Canada Council for the Arts with the highest-ever levels of funding.

It is also important to emphasize that our Government actively supports the work of Canada’s creators both at home and abroad. We do this through programs that deliver effective results for both Canadian creators and taxpayers. In 2008-2009, the Department of Canadian Heritage, its partners and the Portfolio provided almost $22M in support of international activities. This includes $12M through the Canada Council for the Arts, $4.7M through the Association for the Export of Canadian Books, $1.9M through Telefilm Canada, $2.3M through FACTOR and Musicaction and $0.6M through the National Film Board of Canada.

Responsible spending decisions are not always easy decisions. At the same time, they are the decisions that Canadian taxpayers expect from us. Our Government has accepted the challenge of making these decisions and we are now moving forward in providing new and renewed support for Canadian arts and culture. We are focused on making responsible and effective investments for all Canadians. I invite all members of the Committee to work with us as we continue to make smart investments in arts and culture in Canada.

James Moore, P.C., M.P.