

Ottawa, March 16th 2020

The Honourables Bill Morneau, Steven Guilbeault and Catherine McKenna
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
By email

Dear Ministers Morneau, Guilbeault and McKenna;

The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) represents Canadian museums, large and small, and museum professionals from across the country. Museums play an important role and are uniquely positioned to unite us and defend our common good. Without urgent financial support, they are at risk of not being able to fulfil their much-needed role in our communities.

To support social distancing efforts, many museums across the country have made the decision to suspend additional public programming, and in some cases, to close completely.

This is of course not without financial consequence.

Museums are demonstrating leadership in these difficult times, some closing with no guarantee of financial support to offset the lost revenues from suspending their activities. Other museums remain open, but with decreased visitor numbers as people limit their social activities.

Even in closure, museums are working tirelessly to fulfill their missions. Many are continuing operations and contributing content to the digital space. Examples include offering social media based tours and learning materials through their websites in an effort to create healthy diversions for people staying home.

We are therefore asking the Government of Canada to consider the following recommendations to help support museums and museum workers in this crisis.

COVID-19 support measures for Canada's museums

A dedicated museum relief fund to support lost revenues

We need a dedicated fund to support museum closures and cancelled activities. The financial relief will enable museums to support public health without placing any delicate infrastructure at risk. This will also support museum workers to be able to carry on their important work.

Emergency development fund for museum digital activities

An additional fund is needed to support museums' digital activities during this crisis. The museum sector has a multitude of passionate and capable professionals who, with quickly accessible financial support, could use their museum's resources to improve the well-being of Canadians who are staying home.

Truly, museums want to help in these complicated and rapidly evolving times. We are here to serve the Canadian public and support healthy communities across the nation. Please consider Canada's museums as highly capable allies, who share the governments dedication to the well-being of all Canadians.

We know you are doing all you can to support the stewards of Canadian heritage. We thank you for giving these recommendations your urgent attention. We invite your response and are here to assist in any way that we can in supporting museums, and the Canadian public at large.

Sincerely,

Vanda Vitali, Ph.D
Executive Director & CEO, Canadian Museums Association