

October 26, 2015

The Honorable Michael Coteau
Minister, Tourism, Culture and Sport
9th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Dear Minister Coteau:

RE: e-Resources Funding for Libraries

The Toronto Public Library Board appreciates your support of public libraries and the important role they play in addressing literacy and education, and in supporting inclusion and diversity.

While the Board understands the Province's fiscal challenges, it is of great concern that public libraries have lost funding for Ontarian's access to e-Resources. Public libraries play a critical role in the social, educational, cultural and economic success of the communities in our province. Public Libraries are an essential investment in the future of our communities and are essential drivers of success in school preparedness, reading readiness, college readiness and success, economic and employment success, and social equity. As the development of the knowledge economy progresses, public libraries are a vital link for every resident and every community to ensure success of all Ontarians, regardless of location or background.

Toronto Public Library is currently engaged in a broad based public and stakeholder consultation as the Board develops its new strategic plan. We have heard first-hand about the importance of access to new technology and digital resources. We have heard about the difference these and other library services make in the lives of Torontonians from all backgrounds, age groups and walks of life.

The loss of this provincial funding for e-Resources comes at a time when libraries are challenged to find the funds to purchase these resources because of the high prices charged for this content and the low Canadian dollar. The Library Board is requesting you work with your cabinet colleagues to develop inter-ministerial solutions that will restore the lost funding.

In today's technological world, the public library's role in bridging the digital divide and providing equitable access to digital resources is more important now than ever before.

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Please lend your support to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ron Carinci, Chair
Toronto Public Library Board

cc: FOPL Board
James Hamilton, DM, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Kevin Finnerty, ADM, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
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