

February 12, 2004

M. Jean-Claude Villiard
Deputy Minister
Industry Canada
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

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Dear Deputy Minister:

It was a pleasure to meet with you on Thursday, February 5, and to have the opportunity to talk to you about the Toronto Public Library. To provide you with more information about the Library, I am enclosing a copy of our 2002 Annual Report.

Also important was our discussion about the role that public libraries have played in providing Internet access to Canadians. Industry Canada funding through the Urban Community Access Program (2000/2001) and the Sustainability Program for Internet Access (2001/2002 and 2003/2004) has enabled Toronto Public Library to upgrade its Internet services to high-speed service, to provide free Internet training in 11 Learning Centres and to develop Internet content, such as our small business information portal, called SmallBizXpress.

The *Connecting Canadians* program, established in 1998, has had a tremendous impact on the information communications infrastructure in communities across Canada. LibraryNet and SchoolNet have been effective collaborators with Industry Canada in developing and delivering the *Connecting Canadians* agenda. The result is a library network of information and communications technologies that supports key elements of Canada's Innovation Strategy: access to a knowledge network of libraries; literacy, lifelong learning and information literacy skills improvements; welcoming and integrating newcomers to Canada; opportunities for access to online communities.

The Council of Administrators of Large Urban Public Libraries (CALUPL), of which Toronto Public Library is a member, reports that urban public libraries enabled more than 71 million electronic visits to the Internet and the Web from 2000 to 2002. CALUPL wishes to build on that success and is preparing a proposal to Industry Canada for a sustainable partnership, including a funding framework, that secures opportunity for all Canadians to participate and to develop and refine their technology skills.

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On behalf of the Toronto Public Library Board, I wish to thank Industry Canada for the funding support it has given to public libraries and to TPL in particular. We welcome the opportunity to promote the continuation of programs that would sustain and grow Canada's digital capacity.

Yours truly,

Gillian Mason
Chair

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Enclosure