



April 2019

Hon. Doug Ford (Etobicoke North)
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

The Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) is disappointed with the Ontario government's recent decision to drastically cut funding for Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) and Ontario Library Service - North (OLSN) by fifty percent. In Stephen Cook's article, "Funding cuts to Northern, Southern Ontario library systems hit rural and Indigenous communities," Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport Michael Tibollo is quoted as saying that these agencies "have no involvement in the day-to-day operations of Ontario's public libraries." We reject this notion. The key resource-sharing and distribution services provided by SOLS and OLSN are essential to public libraries in Ontario, helping them to deliver programs and provide quality service to communities across the province. These cuts will have severe long-term consequences for Ontario's economy and society.

As a network representing over 350 archival institutions and information professionals, the AAO acknowledges the value that public libraries bring to Ontario. By cutting the budgets of SOLS and OLSN, the government is effectively reducing the sustainability of libraries that fulfill essential community needs: from providing safe community spaces to supporting access to services, training, and technology to patrons of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Without the assistance provided by these agencies, public libraries will have to absorb the costs into their already limited budgets.

As of April 26, 2019, SOLS has suspended its interlibrary loan service, which provides 200 municipalities with access to resources their public libraries may not have, and which will result in the loss of 24 drivers. Last year they drove almost 1 million kilometers to deliver over 710,000 packages to 153 main library branches across Southern Ontario. They also made reciprocal agreements between libraries like the Perth County Information Network and

the Language Instruction for Newcomers program possible. They brought new purchased material from jobbers to over 100 libraries at cost-effective rates. SOLS also manages a fund that provides access to 60,000 e-books, making titles available to small libraries who would otherwise be unable to afford them. These vital services are now at risk as a result of these cuts.

Tragically, public libraries in northern, remote and Indigenous communities will suffer the most as a result of these cuts. Often removed from other services, the sharing of resources and coordination between these institutions is key to ensuring equal access to information, programming, and education. OLSN has announced it is ending postage reimbursement, leaving it to public libraries to pay Canada Post to move materials.

We stand with our librarian colleagues and denounce these short-sighted cuts. The recent actions taken by SOLS and OLSN clearly demonstrate the important role they play in enhancing and contributing to public library service in Ontario.

Sincerely,



James Roussain
President, Archives Association of Ontario, 2019-2020

Cc: **Hon. Michael A. Tibollo (Vaughan—Woodbridge)**

Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Room 6W416
438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
michael.tibollo@pc.ola.org

Jill Andrew (Toronto—St. Paul)

Critic, Culture
New Democratic Party of Ontario
Room 115
Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5
jandrew-co@ndp.on.ca