



CLA Response to the Federal Budget 2015 Online Consultation

Budget 2015 will continue to build on the positive momentum of our Government's strong record of job creation, economic growth, and fiscal responsibility. As we return to balanced budgets, the Minister would like your views on a variety of key issues facing Canada today.

Please make any comments you have in the text boxes below. Keep your comments brief and concise as there is a 200 word limit. Given the large volume of responses we expect, the word limit is necessary to ensure all submissions can be properly reviewed.

1. The Government is focused on creating jobs and economic growth. What can Government do to help businesses grow, increase trade and investment and encourage the private sector to hire new employees?

In order to promote business growth in the private sector, The Canadian Library Association recommends investing in libraries. Business owners, entrepreneurs and job seekers use libraries to connect with up to date information about growing industries and growing businesses. Accessing market information is a critical component of business development. Libraries also provide programs to help users develop skills through programs and skills training. New facilities such as Makerspaces, recording studios, 3D printing labs and gaming centres, provide innovative resources for collaboration, skill development and creative exploration. Libraries are as important to the infrastructure of a community as roads and water mains.

2. The Government is committed to keeping Canada's finances balanced and on a sustainable track, including reducing the debt. This builds on our Government's belief of respecting taxpayers' dollars. In what other areas should we look to make spending more efficient and effective?

CLA believes that spending can be made more efficient and effective for taxpayers by continuing to make improvements to the Copyright Act. The expansion of Fair Dealing provisions have had beneficial results for the public but other opportunities for improvement, which would save taxpayers money, remain. Libraries and schools, researchers and teachers, businesses and students have all benefitted from the inclusion of new fair dealing provisions that make it more affordable for Canadians to use and share copyrighted information for non-infringing purposes. Allowing teachers and students to share more information improves the relevance of academic materials, while decreasing the costs to students and taxpayers. Further, with the surging uptake in tablet and e-reader technology, e-books and e-content are increasingly in demand at Canada's libraries. As a result, libraries have been asked by publishers to pay substantially more for e-books than private individuals. High demand previously allowed libraries to get better deals by buying in bulk, but the opposite is true for e-books. Government should study and prevent e-book prices from being exorbitant, as taxpayers end up shouldering that burden.

3. How can the Government help Canadians with the costs of living and raising a family?

Access to free or low cost resources are crucial for helping Canadians with cost of living and especially with raising a family. This begins with access to health information and services such as prenatal programs and flu vaccinations. Families can borrow books, movies and other educational resources rather than having to purchase them, and they learn of community programs and jobs available through the library community's information sharing. Investing in libraries and helping families with cost of living helps develop informed and

educated Canadians. Another area the government can assist Canadians with raising a family is to ensure information is readily available. As the government continues to undertake the Open Government plan, CLA encourages proper consultation to ensure information is easily accessible to Canadians. As the Government transitions to one large website for example, ensuring no information is lost and that families can easily access information they need about government programs is crucial.

4. What can the Government do to ensure Canadians are obtaining the skills necessary for the jobs of tomorrow?

The CLA believes that the Government can take a number of steps to help Canadians obtain the skills necessary for job seeking. First, they can invest in libraries as centres of education excellence. With up to date resources, access to current technologies and library professionals to assist with research and learning, libraries are invaluable resources for skill development. Libraries also offer resources such as computers and printers for resume creation and courses for Canadians looking to develop job seeking skills. Additionally, as mentioned above, CLA recommends the Government improve upon the steps taken over the last few years to continue to improve the Copyright Act. Removing the digital locks in the fair dealings provision is a crucial step to make the most current and relevant educational information available to students.

5. Are there investments that can build stronger communities and keep our streets safe?

Yes! The federal government can continue to invest in libraries which provide numerous programs for at risk demographics and residents looking to expand their skills. From educational resources for new Canadians, to prison library initiatives, to eLearning modules libraries adapt programming to fit the needs of their ever transforming communities and to ensure up-to-date resources are always available. Investing in programs for new mothers who can then raise happy, healthy children or in a program for the homeless gets people off the street. Overall, libraries are a cornerstone for communities that provide safe havens for learning and access to information.

6. Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding the Government's Economic Action Plan?

CLA strongly encourages the Government to continue with a well structured and timely plan to implement the Open Government Action Plan. In this regard, CLA encourages a thorough consultation process, including a set of guidelines, and a variety of means to engage stakeholders. CLA believes that by implementing such standards, interested parties will be more likely to engage and collaborate with government in support of both openness and transparency. Under the Open Government Plan, CLA also encourages the 'Open Docs' plan to be undertaken carefully and thoroughly to ensure preservation of information. To this end, CLA recommends a clear strategy for digitizing publications be implemented. Finally, CLA recommends that the government increase resource allocation to departments, such as Library and Archives Canada, to ensure that archiving, cataloguing, and digitization activities can continue in an efficient and timely manner. Furthermore, it is crucial that archived web content be made searchable and accessible to the public. Partnering with academic institutions or non-governmental organizations could be a valuable, complementary approach to ensure that all forms of government information are preserved and remain accessible in the long-term.

Submitted on behalf of the Canadian Library Association

March 4, 2015

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/nr-nc/2014/prebudget-prebudgetaire-eng.asp>