

[DATE]

Hon. Josée Verner P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Verner,

I wish to voice my deep concern regarding the recent funding cuts to the cultural sector announced by the federal government and particularly, the elimination of the Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund (CIFVF).

Since its inception, the CIFVF has funded 1,000 projects from all regions of Canada in both official languages for a total of \$20 million. The CIFVF is the only organization in Canada that supports the program production sector that specializes in Canadian educational and informational programming for the non-theatrical sector.

[IF PERTINENT, INSERT SPECIFICS ABOUT YOUR OWN CIFVF SUPPORTED PRODUCTIONS HERE]

Although a small fund, the CIFVF is an essential component of the financing structure for documentary films and videos. Many productions supported by the CIFVF have been broadcast nationally and internationally, have gone on to win awards and earned profits for their investors. These projects are an invaluable and inexpensive resource for Canadian libraries and educational institutions wanting to make Canadian content available and committed to presenting a Canadian perspective on a wide variety of issues.

The CIFVF has supported many award-winning projects and talent. For example, *The Corporation*, funded in part by the CIFVF, was the number one Canadian documentary as well as the second highest grossing Canadian-made film overall for 2004. The film has grossed \$5.6 million worldwide and garnered 25 awards at international film festivals. The CIFVF was a funder in the award-winning children's series *This is Daniel Cook*. Zacharias Kunuk, who won the Golden Camera prize for first-time directors at Cannes Film Festival in 2001, is a CIFVF alumnus.

Many of the projects funded by the CIFVF have small broadcast licences that are not high enough to qualify for the Canadian Television Fund (CTF). To be more precise, in 2006, 65% of the projects assisted by the CIFVF received neither CTF nor Telefilm funding. In 2007, 73% of the projects funded by the CIFVF did not receive either CTF or Telefilm financing. CIFVF funding has been critical to the realization of these projects.

Since 2000, between 31% to 34% of the successful projects awarded money by the CIFVF have involved new and emerging talent. Assistance from the CIFVF allows

new and emerging producers to hone not only their creative skills but also their business skills of securing financing, becoming knowledgeable about marketing and distribution, setting up and running their own companies. In performing this work, the CIFVF is investing in the long-term survival of the industry. In this way, the Fund is often the launching pad from which filmmakers begin their careers and progress on to make drama and feature films.

Many of the projects assisted by the CIFVF are made for social purposes. These projects seek, through the filmmaking, marketing and distribution process, to raise awareness and build understanding of a specific issue, idea, topic, cause or situation. One such project supported by the CIFVF was *Silence of the Strings- A Community Movement for Music*. This film helped saved a public school music program. A year after its release, the producers showed the film at some Seniors Centres. They found many retired teachers and other seniors for whom making music was a critical social and educational force in their lives. A number of seniors they met became active, as a result of seeing *Silence of the Strings*, in petitioning the provincial government to return full funding to music education.

I fail to understand why the federal government would aim to undermine the cultural industry when it has shown, again and again, that it yields a high return on what is, overall, a small investment.

I call on you to rescind your decision and provide assurance that the contribution to the CIFVF not be threatened.

Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME]

C.C. Prime Minister of Canada – pm@pm.gc.ca

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