



newfoundland and labrador
library association

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Cathy Bennett, MHA
Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board
Main Floor, East Block
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Dear Minister,

The Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association urges you to reinstate the HST Point of Sale Rebate on books purchased by individuals. Removing this rebate amounts to an increase of an extra 10% sales tax on books. This additional tax will provide little income for the province but will have lasting ramifications for the citizens of this province.

Newfoundland and Labrador has a notoriously low literacy rate, one of the lowest in Canada, and this tax is a further barrier to improving this rate. With the recent closure of Literacy NL in 2015 due to budget cuts, affordable access to books is essential in combatting illiteracy and a tax on books is a step backwards. The provincial government must make education and literacy priorities for its citizens and an increased tax on books does not support such goals.

The impact on this tax will be most keenly felt by students and those with lower incomes. Text books are notoriously, sometimes prohibitively, expensive and the additional tax will prove difficult for a struggling student population. Literacy should not be considered a luxury, yet in these difficult economic times, this may become a reality for lower income families.

The book tax also hurts our provincial authors, publishers, and local independent booksellers. In a time of economic crisis, we need to support our local businesses and creative artists rather than impede them. In a province so well known for its storytelling heritage, and with many award winning authors, it is disheartening that the government is making it more difficult for citizens to access their literary heritage.

No other province has recognized any benefit in placing a tax on books and literacy. Books are resources that improve the lives of our citizens. Moreover, literate and educated citizens are essential for the creation of a successful and thriving economy. The NLLA questions how the government can justify becoming the first province in Canada to apply a provincial tax to books when it is clear that there are so many negative consequences. We strongly urge you to repeal this book tax for the benefit of all citizens in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Sincerely,

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