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January 25, 2017

Open Letter Urging that Newfoundland and Labrador's 10% Tax on Books be Repealed

Dear Premier:

This follows on an earlier letter dated June 20, 2016 in which I urged you, on behalf of the APLA membership, to reconsider imposing a 10% tax on books. Now I am writing, in support of the Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association's statement released last week, to ask that your Government revoke the tax.

In its statement, NLLA points to the negative impact of the tax on students (who must now pay more for already-expensive textbooks); on low-income individuals and families (whose access to books is curtailed); and on authors, publishers and booksellers in your province (whose livelihoods depend on a healthy market for their products).

As NLLA pointed out, Newfoundland and Labrador is the only jurisdiction in Canada to apply a provincial sales tax on books, and this at a time moreover when your Government is considering closing more than half of NL's public libraries. The members of APLA consider both policies retrograde. In a world where literacy is a basic quality-of-life requirement, and where highly-educated and skilled workers are needed more than ever before, placing the tools of learning out of reach is both unjust to individuals and a recipe for economic disaster for the province.

On behalf of the approximately 400 library workers and library supporters who make up the Atlantic Provinces Library Association, I entreat you to rescind the tax on books.

Sincerely,

Suzanne van den Hoogen
APLA President 2016-17

cc: Members of the House of Assembly