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The Honourable Doug Ford,  
Premier of Ontario  
Room 281  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON  
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*Copy Counsel*

April 26, 2019

Dear Sir,

I am writing to protest Minister Tibollo's statement of April 18, regarding funding for public library services. Contrary to the Minister's statement that the Ontario Library Service agencies "have no involvement in day-to-day operations of Ontario's public libraries", residents of small northern communities rely heavily on the services they provide, most obviously in inter-library loans. This service provides access to the entire province's inventory of library books to any resident anywhere. As such, it is an excellent use of public resources for the benefit of all.

Furthermore, Ontario Library Services-North provides essential support to small community librarians and boards of directors, and technical and administrative services, that together provide a level of service to these communities that would otherwise be impossible. As such, it evens the playing field in providing access to resources that are taken for granted in big city libraries.

I would like to point out also, with respect to the access to computers and the Internet provided by libraries, that not every home has a computer or high-speed Internet access. The changes to education that your government proposes, such that e-learning will be a compulsory component of high school courses, contradicts Minister Tibollo's position on Library Services. If libraries in small northern communities are forced, by a reduction in services, to reduce access to computers and high-speed Internet, either because of shorter hours of operation or a lack of technical support, students at all levels will suffer. Residents who rely on these computers for job searches and applications, distance education, and all the other functions of electronic communication that are increasingly taken for granted in modern life, will also suffer.

In conclusion, I urge you and your government to recognize the essential services provided by libraries in small northern communities, by reinstating the funding to Ontario Library Services-North to at least 2017 - 2018 funding levels, as well as maintaining the base funding for Ontario Public Libraries.

Yours sincerely,

  
Judy Gouin

cc. Hon. Michael Tibollo, Minister of Culture, Tourism and Sport  
John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming-Cochrane  
Dan O'Mara, Mayor, Municipality of Temagami ✓