

Deputation to Provincial Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

January 28, 2008

My name is Claire Hopkinson, I am Executive Director of Toronto Arts Council, the city's arm's length funding organization. Through TAC, the City provides \$10 million dollars to 450 arts organizations every year, who in turn produce 18,000 events seen by 7.5 million people. These arts organizations are a key part of the city's culture sector that employs 100,000 people.

Today, I am here as a member of the Fair Deal for Our City Coalition.

When a city as big as Toronto is deprived of the means to sustain itself, the impact stretches far beyond potholes and infrastructure and into the realm of overall prosperity, community engagement and quality of life.

Municipal investment in the arts is the wellspring from which all other investment flows. Toronto Arts Council opens the doors to investment from other levels of government as well as from ticket sales and private sector philanthropy. From their first TAC grants, many of Toronto's greatest arts organizations (including TIFF, Soulpepper and the International Festival of Authors) have grown to contribute to the region's economic vitality.

Thus it is bad news for the city and the province that the Toronto Arts Council funds its artists at a much lower level than every comparable major city in North America. Montreal, Vancouver, Chicago, New York and San Francisco are all able to invest in the arts at between 1.5 and 6 times the rate Toronto manages.

Richard Florida's research demonstrates that arts and creativity are fundamental to a region's competitiveness. If we want to attract tourists and corporate head offices, encourage creative workers and youth engagement we should be increasing investment in our artists.

And, certainly, the province benefits financially every time this investment is increased - tourism dollars, provincial sales tax, and income tax all grow when artists and the accompanying creative industries move into a neighbourhood.

For the city on the other hand, with its limited revenue sources – the arrival of artists actually adds to costs. For this reason, it is hard for a city to invest in its artists at the best of times.

But, we have assurances from City Council, and the Mayor, that when the provincial funding formula is repaired, the City's investment in culture will be increased.

For this reason, in addition to those expressed by my colleagues, I urge this standing committee to commit to covering its costs and reimbursing its municipalities for provincial expenses.