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February 1, 2023

Department of Finance and Treasury Board
7th Floor, Provincial Building
1723 Hollis Street
P.O. Box 187
Halifax, NS B3J 2N3

RE: Department of Finance and Treasury Board Pre-Budget Public Consultation

Dear Minister MacMaster,

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) represents museums across Nova Scotia, including community and provincially managed museums. We are writing to you on behalf of our 115 member museums in response to the call for pre-budget consultation. Museums in Nova Scotia are in dire need of increased funding from the 2023-24 provincial budget.

Request for Budget 2023-24

On January 31, 2023, ANSM met with Minister Dunn and representatives of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage (CCTH). We thank them for their time and support. This letter is to restate the financial ask made at that meeting:

- **Increase to CMAP funding** (Community Museum Assistance Program) by 25-38% (\$250,000-\$370,00) with annual increases to keep pace with inflation.
- Increase of \$2.2 million in **operating funding to Nova Scotia Museum's** M8 sites, with similar increase in funding to locally managed Nova Scotia Museum sites.
- **Increase in CCTH resources** to improve communication and implement a program review dedicated to making funding equitable for all museums in NS.
- **Operational funding prioritized over project funding.**
- **Increase to ANSM operating funding** by \$100,000, along with increased operating funding to the other members of the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia.

Why Fund Museums?

Provincial support to museums makes up only a portion of museums' operating budgets, but this portion is key to a museum's financial sustainability. Provincial funding is leveraged in other grants, projects, and sponsors. It also empowers museums to generate revenue through admissions, donations, retail sales, and events.

Museums help Government address many important concerns, including:

- **Job Opportunities.** Over 800 Nova Scotians are employed in the museum sector.
- **Economic drivers, especially in the tourism industry.** Museums are attractions and also act as visitor information centers and community navigators, especially in rural NS.

- **Health Benefits.** Museums provide mental and public health benefits, including recreation spaces, such as walking trails. They also help attract professionals such as health care professionals.
- **Social Well-being of Seniors and Older Adults.** Over 2,700 Nova Scotians volunteer with museums, many of these are seniors.
- **Recruit and retain people in rural Nova Scotia.** Museums encourage people to make rural Nova Scotia their home. Museum staff and their families volunteer, shop, live, and recreate in their community.
- **Improving EDIA by sharing Nova Scotia's complex history.** As supported by ANSM's TRACK program, museums are helping Nova Scotians understand and contextualize our rich history, which includes working with Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, and Gaelic communities to share their stories.

What will happen without increased government support – 2023 ANSM Member Survey

Nova Scotia's museums find themselves at a critical impasse. In January 2023 ANSM conducted a survey with member museums. The survey results show an industry struggling to keep lights on but continuing to work towards excellence.

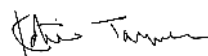
- **Staffing and Volunteer Crisis.** Museums are struggling to recruit and retain staff and volunteers. The survey indicated only 40% of museums in NS have at least 1 staff who is paid a living wage. In the next five years, museums anticipate losing on average 52% of their staff and volunteers due to burnout, retirement, layoffs, or personal factors.
- **Reduction in Offerings.** When asked, if funding is not increased, what results do you anticipate in the next year, 61% of respondents said they will reduce operating hours. 63% said they will reduce hiring and/or cut existing staff. 50% said that they will reduce programming. 61% said their ability to respond to community needs would be negatively impacted.
- **Return to 2019 Visitation.** 41% of museums indicate they have returned to or increased visitation from 2019. The 2019 NS Visitor Exit Survey showed approximately 10% of visitors to NS visit a museum or historic site. Museums are working hard to meet public needs through special events, school programs, new exhibits, and rich collections. This return to success will be delayed when museums are struggling to keep their lights on and doors open.

ANSM hopes supporting museums, which in turn supports Nova Scotians, is a priority in the 2023-24 NS provincial budget. ANSM will continue to work with the Minister and staff from CCTH, and we are available to answer questions or provide data that would help in the 2023-24 budget process. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Maggie MacIntyre, Executive Director, director@ansm.ns.ca

Thank you for your consideration.



Maggie MacIntyre
Executive Director



Katie Tanner
President