

***[The following telephone script was designed as a conversation guide. Your Library Board Chair may wish to refer to this information during the discussion(s) with the MLA(s) in your area.]***

Thank you for your time [this morning/afternoon/evening]. I appreciate you must be very busy with [establishing your new constituency office/returning to office after a successful campaign]. On behalf of the library system in this community, I offer you my congratulations on your recent [election/re-election].

I'd like to take a few minutes and discuss the funding relationship between the province and 71 public library systems in BC. Public libraries have traditionally received essential support from the province for projects and programs that would not otherwise exist. When you consider the dollar value, \$17.7 *million* in 08/09, the figure represents less than 2% of the total Ministry of Education budget of \$5.7 *billion*. To the government, it may appear as a drop in the bucket given the increasing requests from the health and education sectors. But this investment of \$17.7 million represents a critical 10% of public library funding across the province.

The funding we have received to date has been used effectively and efficiently. Here are just a few of the creative ways libraries and the province are working together. These collaborative projects ensure equal access to information, in all communities...

- No matter where you live or work in the province, your **BC OneCard** provides access to all public library systems in British Columbia.
- For anyone with a question, BC libraries can provide an answer. Our **AskAway** online reference service is available free to the public throughout the province.
- Children taking part in the **BC Summer Reading Club** can maintain or enhance their literacy skills. The joys and benefits of reading last a lifetime.
- We offer literally hundreds of online magazine, journal and newspaper subscriptions, all packaged in convenient **databases**. The information is available online, anytime, with the click of a mouse.  
A provincial license for these databases provides each public library system with equal access to the information. The collective purchase is also very cost effective. Vendors give significant discounts for their products, up to 80% in some cases, depending on the number of library systems involved in the purchase.

Public libraries are very concerned that all people, regardless of where they live, receive equal access to information. The level of service we receive should not depend on our postal code. Local governments provide funding for the services within their boundaries. The provincial government provides the essential funds we need to collaborate, in order to build province-wide services. The power, and the value, of the provincial system is clear when you consider the millions of books, CDs, DVDs and databases available to every library, large and small. Without provincial support, equal access will be eroded.

As you probably know, libraries are experiencing a surge in demand for job searching workshops, Internet access and career-related information. In these difficult times, people need us more than ever. The library is a cornerstone of your community, and we are a trusted and reliable institution. I hope we can count on your support in the future, to protect the provincial

library grants. As I mentioned, it represents a very small percentage of the provincial budget, but if it is cut, it will have a powerful and profound impact on local communities.

Thank you once again for your time, and I welcome any questions you might have.