

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALTA Members

FROM: Natalia Toroshenko, President

SUBJECT: Advocacy

DATE: August 12, 2009.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of ALTA, I write to inform you about two important matters relating to the need to advocate on behalf of your library and libraries across Alberta. Both are time-sensitive. We encourage you to follow the steps outlined below to help advance libraries through this effort.

1 Provincial Government Funding

Following a meeting with the Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs responsible for libraries, we are encouraged that the Minister does not want to see provincial subsidies to libraries frozen at current levels for a long period of time as in the past. Having just asked for and received additional support in this year's budget, he is not in a position to ask for another increase next year. However, he has informed us that it becomes crucially important for the long-term that MLAs be informed how the additional subsidies for your library have been put to good use.

ACTIONS:

A We ask that every library in the province write a letter to its MLA(s) to thank him/her/them for the additional provincial government funding and to inform them how this "new money" is being used to better serve the public. This will help reassure MLAs that their support is well invested and help the Minister fight for increased support for the long-term advancement of libraries in Alberta.

B Public Library Boards are also asked to encourage their respective municipal council to do the same.

2 Federal Government - Bill C322

In the fall sitting of parliament, a Private Member's Bill, Bill C322, will be introduced to the House of Commons. The motion calls for an Amendment to the Canada Post Corporations Act to provide for a reduction in the rate of postage library materials. The motion to introduce Bill C322 is being made by Melvin Tweed, M.P. for Brandon – Souris and seconded by Alberta's own, Chris Warkenton, M.P., Peace River.

BACKGROUNDER

"This Bill will protect the Library Book Rate available through Canada Post" according to the Canadian Library Association. Since 1939, The Library Book Rate has provided a reduced rate for mailing library materials between libraries and from libraries to their users. Canada Post has not guaranteed support for the program beyond 2009. Bill C- 322 would provide that the Government of Canada support a concessionary postal rate for Canada's public libraries thus guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the program. The legislation would also expand the Library Book Rate program to include non-print materials such as CDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs. Over 2,000 public libraries in Canada actively make use of the Library Book Rate. It is an indispensable part of the service delivered by public, academic, school and special libraries across the county.

ACTIONS:

- A Visit <http://www.mervtweed.com> to sign the petition to support the Bill C-322.
- B On behalf of your Library Board, write your MP to ask him/her to support the Bill. A sample letter can be found at the ALTA website: www.librarytrustees.ab.ca .
- C Encourage your customers/users to sign the petition and to write their MP.

Sample Letter to MP

Date

Honourable (Name) , MP

Constituency

House of Commons

Ottawa, ON

K1A 0A6

Re: Bill C-322, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials)

Dear Honourable M.P.,

On February 25, 2009, a private Members' Bill C-322 (formerly Bill C-458) was introduced to parliament. The Bill calls for an amendment to the Canada Post Corporation Act to provide for a reduction in the rate of postage for library materials.

Since 1939, Canadian public libraries have been able to exchange books at a reduced postal rate, known as the Library Book Rate. Since 1997, the costs of the program have been incurred by Canada Post. However, financial support by Canada Post is not guaranteed. Bill C-322 would provide that the Government of Canada support a concessionary postal rate for Canada's public libraries, thus guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the program. The legislation would also expand the Library Book Rate program to include non-print materials such as CDs, CD-ROMS, and DVDs.

I/we urge you to support the passing of Bill C-322. This bill will recognize the vital and necessary function libraries perform daily in Canada. Libraries not only help educate the public, they provide life choices for their users, help promote and engender literacy, and contribute to the quality of life of people of all ages, ethno-cultural groups and demographic backgrounds everywhere.

We ask for your assistance in supporting Bill C322. Please also urge your fellow MPs to support it.

Sincerely,

(Your Name Here)