**[I/We/Please]** support increased operating funding for Ontario’s museums in 2018!

Dear [Minister or MPP],

I am writing to you on behalf of [name of organization or museum] to ask for your support for an increase in operating funding for Ontario’s museums through increased funding for the Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG).

Museums’ vitality and the quality of collections and their work – and the opportunities these present – require stable, sustained operational funding from the province. In the absence of a new funding model and revised programs as identified in the culture strategy, museums have identified an immediate need for additional operational funding, and have formally requested an increase of $5 million for Ontario’s community museums. This would bring the current Community Museums Operating Grant (CMOG) Program to $10 million in 2018.

This funding has not been increased in ten years, limiting the museum sector’s ability to deal with growth, increased costs and community demands. An adequate funding increase is required to respond to the last ten years of inflation, along with increased hydro costs, infrastructure maintenance, implementing green and other important initiatives and the minimum wage increase of the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act*.

Additional funding is vital for museums to survive and thrive, for the benefit of Ontarians in communities in all corners of the province. A CMOG Increase would allow my museum to [eg. offer expanded programs etc.]

Museums contribute to cultural tourism and the knowledge economy, meaningful job creation, including youth employment, and community inclusion and engagement. Frankly, increased funding is also required to keep the lights on and respond to the changing world we all live in. Our workforce is characterized by committed employees who are the definition of precarious workers – seasonal, part-time and poorly paid despite high education levels. Like others in the nonprofit sector, museums have responded to our province’s financial challenges by doing more with less and by innovating to respond to community needs despite budgets that have been flatlined for 10 years. Provincial funding is critical to museums, especially smaller community museums, and is essential to leverage other levels of public and private investment.

Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have a provincial museum that tells the story of our province. The Ontario Heritage Act recognizes community museums instead, as the stewards of our collective heritage as Ontarians. These institutions are central community hubs. The Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) is the only program providing operating support and this to fewer than 200 museums.

[MPP Name], Ontario museums call on your support of our sector’s request for an increase of $5 million in operating funding for community museums in 2018. We ask that you advance this request with relevant policy makers, and your colleagues at Queen’s Park to allow for the continued contribution of museums to the province’s economy and quality of life for all Ontarians.

Thank you for ensuring that our sector can continue to promote cultural engagement and inclusion, provide fuel for the creative economy, and strengthen culture in communities.

Sincerely,

[Name, title]

[Organization name]

cc: Ontario Museum Association