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March 4, 2026

Office of the Legislative Counsel
Public Bills Committee
802-1809 Barrington Street
P.O. Box 1116
Halifax, NS B3J 2X1

VIA EMAIL: Legc.office@novascotia.ca

RE: Financial Measures Act

To the Public Bills Committee,

The South Shore Public Library Board would like to express our disappointment and concern with the proposed 2026/27 Provincial Budget as tabled on February 23, 2026. The effects across the arts, culture, and heritage sector will be devastating and wide-reaching. Closures to museum sites, visitor information centers, and dozens of essential grant programs will place further pressure on already-strained public libraries, who frequently act as ambassadors of local culture and tourism, in addition to our core roles of supporting literacy and lifelong learning.

Arts, culture, and heritage are not “discretionary” expenses. They are the very lifeblood of our communities, protecting our past, supporting our present, and safeguarding our future. They affect a community’s ability to thrive; how we see ourselves; how we interact with each other, support well-being, economic development, education, newcomer integration, social cohesion, lifelong learning, and empathy; how we deal with isolation, mental illness, food and housing insecurity; how we foster creativity and civic engagement; and so much more.

Like other regional libraries, SSPL has been stretched to our limit. With the support of municipalities in our area, we have been raising the alarm. Despite this, provincial core funding remains flat, as it has for seven fiscal years. “Status quo” funding does not represent stability. Given rises in community demand, population growth, and record inflation, our Board is faced with impossible decisions around what to cut next from our annual budget. Continuing the “status quo” is chipping away our ability to support literacy, cultural vitality, and community health. This will only be amplified by cuts across the sector.

We urge the province to revisit the effects of the proposed budget on the community sector. SSPL stands ready to work with your office to develop sustainable, cost-effective solutions to ensure public libraries, alongside publishers, museums, tourism and other sector partners, can continue to serve and enrich our communities effectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison Smith".

Alison Smith

Chairperson, on behalf of SSPL Library Board

cc: Minister Ritcey