



ALBERTA
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Grande Prairie*

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AR103535

Mr. Barry Morishita
President
Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
president@auma.ca

Dear Mr. Morishita,

Thank you for your correspondence of November 3, 2020, regarding the two resolutions AUMA recently passed concerning library service in the province.

With regard to the resolution put forward to increase operating grants based on increasing populations, I understand your concern. In difficult fiscal times, we are working hard to maintain public library grant funding and our network support. Library grants remained stable in the 2020/21 budget and I have promised to make this happen for the 2021/22 budget as well. I am proud we have stable funding and that our funding is some of the highest provincial support to libraries in Canada.

The province also supports interlibrary loan delivery and management, and has funded \$2.5 million in SuperNet connectivity and provided \$1 million in e-content. Our provincial support of ebooks and connectivity has proven vital during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud that we have maintained this funding, which helps ensure equitable access to library resources and services.

If we were to adjust grants for increasing populations right now, we would have to do so within our existing \$30.5-million grant budget, which would see more funds go to larger centres and smaller grants for rural libraries. This would be devastating for many libraries in light of COVID-19 recovery and the viability of communities. It is much more equitable that library funding remain stable for all.

As to the resolution put forward on the review of the Libraries Act, I have asked ministry staff to develop a plan for engaging key partners in a targeted "red tape reduction" review of this important legislation. More information will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Thank you for sharing these resolutions with me and for your members' commitment to providing strong public library service in Alberta.

Sincerely,

Tracy L. Allard
Minister