



**Good morning Chair and committee members,**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that I'm joining you from Victoria, on the traditional territories of the Lkwungen-speaking peoples (now known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations) and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. I recognize their deep and ongoing relationships with these lands and waters and express my gratitude for the chance to live and work here.

My name is Don Gorman. I'm the publisher of Rocky Mountain Books, based in Victoria, and the 24/25 President of Books BC, the professional association representing 26 B.C.-owned and -operated book publishers.

Together, these publishers form the backbone of B.C.'s vibrant book industry, contributing to an ecosystem that generates **\$84 million annually** for the provincial GDP. Beyond the numbers, our sector plays a foundational role in telling B.C. stories through children's books, Indigenous-authored works, regional histories, travel guides, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and scholarly research. These wide-ranging books reach readers across Canada and around the world, helping to amplify British Columbia's voice, knowledge, and creativity.

We're grateful for the province's continued support for arts and culture. However, I'd like to speak to how we can build on this foundation. The 2025 budget projects a steady investment in culture, **holding flat at \$192 million through 2027/28**. On the surface, that may appear stable. But for our sector, it also signals a missed opportunity and a call to do more, especially as we look to grow our reach and impact in a challenging landscape.

There are three areas in particular where small, well-placed investments could have an outsized impact:

**1. The BC Book Publishing Tax Credit:**

This program is already working — and working well. It allows publishers to claim a credit of up to 90% of their federal funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Book Fund.

Year to year, the cost of the Book Publishing Tax Credit hovers between \$2 and \$3 million, yet this modest provincial investment delivers outsized results for book publishers throughout the province, giving us the flexibility to invest in ongoing operations, take creative risks, and build long-term plans. Notably, the province has already removed the sunset clause from the Film and Television Tax Credit and, in Budget 2025, made the Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit permanent as well. These decisions reflect a broader recognition of the cultural and economic value of B.C.'s creative sectors. **We respectfully suggest that the book publishing industry deserves the same long-term commitment.** Removing the sunset clause from the BC Book Publishing Tax Credit would send a strong, clear signal that the province believes in the future of its own literary and cultural producers that it has already invested in for decades.



## 2. Expanded support through Creative BC and the BC Arts Council:

Through both the BC Arts Council and Creative BC, funding for reaching new markets remains limited. The Current Book Publishers Market Fund caps out at \$150,000 a year giving a maximum of \$10,000 per publisher. Historically, the U.S. has been the primary export destination for Canadian books — but this is increasingly at risk. If B.C. publishers are to grow and survive, we need expanded, dedicated funding for international outreach. This isn't just about selling more books. It's about raising the global profile of B.C. voices and showcasing our cultural strengths on the world stage.

In addition, BC Arts Council funding hasn't seen a permanent increase in over a decade. In 2017, the BC NDP pledged to double the BC Arts Council's annual budget to \$48 million, as the BC Liberals had held the Council's budget flat at **\$24 million annually since 2013/14**. Adjusted for inflation, that commitment would amount to approximately **\$58.7 million in 2024**. In 2017, the new government raised it to **\$31.2 million** — a notable increase, but still well short of their doubling promise announced in 2017.

Since then, however, there has been **no permanent or sustained increase**. The 2025/26 provincial budget proposes raising the BC Arts Council's budget only marginally — from **\$38.97 million to \$39.16 million**, an increase of just **\$186,000**.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport's current service plan indicates that **fewer grants through the BC Arts Council's Arts Infrastructure Program are expected to be delivered next year** due to rising costs. This underscores a troubling trend: **while publishers continue to face mounting cost pressures for everything from paper to shipping and distribution, core funding has remained effectively stagnant for over a decade and has not kept pace with demand**.

## 3. Copyright Protections

While copyright is governed federally, its impact is felt locally. Weak protections (like those stemming from the ongoing issues with fair dealing) discourage investment in new work and harm creators at every level. We urge the province to advocate for stronger copyright protections and to support education programs that build understanding of intellectual property rights. A well-informed sector that compensates creators and publishers for original works is a stronger, more sustainable one.

**To summarize, our three recommendations for Budget 2026 are:**

1. **Remove the sunset clause** from the BC Book Publishing Tax Credit and reaffirm long-term support for a proven tool that supports growth and stability.
2. **Increase the BC Arts Council's annual budget to \$58 million. Increase market expansion funding** through Creative BC — enabling publishers to explore new audiences and revenue streams beyond the U.S. Increase
3. **Support work to strengthen copyright protections** through both advocacy and education so that B.C. creators and publishers can continue to invest in their work with confidence.



**The Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia**  
**Submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services**  
**Provincial Budget 2026 Consultation**

These are strategic, realistic, and cost-effective steps. And they're not just about helping publishers; they're about strengthening education, literacy, regional representation, and cultural resilience across B.C.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.