



DOCUMENTARY
ORGANIZATION OF CANADA
DOCUMENTARISTES
DU CANADA

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June 8, 2011

The Honourable James Moore
Minister of Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister Moore,

The Documentary Organization of Canada / l'Association des documentaristes du Canada applauds the federal government's support of the Canada Media Fund by making an ongoing commitment to the CMF in the 2011 budget.

The CMF is one of the pillars of a healthy Canadian documentary culture and industry. Year after year, it invests critical funds into the production of Canadian documentaries. While we believe that the CMF has certain flaws, we would like to reiterate our unilateral support for its existence and importance.

We would like to take this opportunity to request a meeting with you to discuss particular difficulties faced by documentary filmmakers and discuss some ideas we think would improve the way in which Heritage Canada and CMF can support documentary production.

In the past few years, broadcasters' investment in the documentary genre has waned, especially in the realm of feature length and one-off documentaries. The TV business model for these films has eroded. While audiences are flocking to online platforms and are looking for these films on multiplatforms – including theatres, TVs, mobile devices, laptops, etc – there is still no business model to finance these kinds of documentaries unless a TV broadcaster is involved.

As a result, the number of feature and one-off documentaries being made each year is dropping dramatically. The genre is under great pressure. While it is sometimes tough to make an economic case for documentary production, the cultural case is unequivocal. Now, more than ever, it is of the utmost importance that Canadians bring international stories home, and export Canadian stories to the world. Documentaries and documentarians are cultural ambassadors for the country.

One of the stated goals and purposes of both the CMF and the Broadcast Act is to support a diversity of voices, stories and genres. Documentaries are part of the cultural fabric of this country; in fact, we'd argue that documentary is embedded in Canada's cultural DNA!

The creation of the CMF was a forward thinking initiative: digital platforms hold so much promise for the creation and dissemination of cultural content and documentary producers and filmmakers are embracing the opportunities provided by the multitude of platforms. In fact, we'd love to show you some of our members' best work!

We look forward to the opportunity of sharing our hopes and aspirations for the CMF and documentary production within a strong Canadian cultural context.

Once again, thank you for your time in considering our meeting request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'John Christou', is written below a horizontal line.

John Christou
Chair