

September 4, 2020

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P.,
Minister of Canadian Heritage

Dear Ministers Freeland and Guilbeault:

**Re: Support for the creation of an emergency temporary fund to
indemnify Canadian productions for costs related to COVID-19 interruptions**

The Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC) represents just over 800 diverse documentary professionals from all provinces and territories in Canada – a community of dedicated storytellers whose livelihood has been gravely destabilized by the pandemic.

Due to a lack of insurance coverage related to COVID-19, many Canadian productions are currently at risk of being postponed to next year or abandoned altogether. For these reasons, **DOC strongly supports the immediate creation of a government-backed emergency temporary fund to indemnify Canadian productions for costs related to COVID-19 interruptions.**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, production volume in Canada for 2018/19 reached an all-time high of \$9.3 billion, resulting in 180,900 full-time equivalent jobs, while contributing \$12.8 billion to the national GDP.¹ A production shutdown from mid-March until the end of June is projected to have put as much as \$2.5 billion in production volume and the livelihood of 172,000 workers across Canada at risk.² As the shutdown for many productions continues, these numbers are only expected to grow.

While many sectors of the economy are reopening across the country, the vast majority of Canadian productions are unable to start shooting due to the lack of pandemic insurance coverage available on the commercial market. Insurance companies will not provide coverage for COVID-19-related insurance claims, and without this coverage most Canadian productions are unable to close financing and start shooting.

This is a global problem and other countries, such as the UK, France, and Australia, have responded to support their domestic producers with government-backed insurance schemes. Quebec has introduced temporary measures to ensure their productions are covered, but a Canada-wide solution is desperately needed as well.

¹ [Profile 2019: Economic Report on the Screen-based Media Production Industry in Canada.](#)

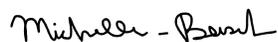
² [CMPA press release, Canada's film and TV production sector faces \\$2.5 billion hit due to COVID-19.](#)



The summer and fall seasons are typically some of the busiest times of the year for production. With each passing day, this situation becomes more urgent. In the documentary sector alone, there are hundreds of contracted productions (employing thousands of freelancers) that potentially hang in the balance. Most documentary companies are small and lean with many at risk of going under if production does not resume due to lack of insurance.

DOC supports the creation of a temporary emergency fund to indemnify Canadian productions for costs of COVID-19-related interruptions. This solution will provide producers with affordable coverage for any COVID-19 losses, ensure stability in the screen sector, and enable filmmaking professionals to get back to work and stay afloat. We respectfully urge the Government of Canada to enact such a program without further delay.

Sincerely,



Michelle van Beusekom
Executive Director
Documentary Organization of Canada

c.c. Mr. Jeremy Broadhurst, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.
Jeremy.broadhurst@dpmo-dvpm.gc.ca

Mr. Mathieu Bouchard, Chief of Staff to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.
Mathieu.bouchard@canada.ca

Ina Fichman, Chair of the Board, Documentary Organization of Canada
ina@intuitivepictures.ca