



DOCUMENTARY
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sent via e-mail

Minister Liz Sandals
Minister of Education
14th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Sandals,

I'm writing on behalf of the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC), to convey our members' wholehearted support for TVOntario (TVO).

DOC is a national non-profit arts service association representing over 800 independent directors, producers and craftspeople working in the documentary genre; more than half of our members are Ontario-based.

As our members will attest, TVO plays a crucial role in the broadcast landscape in Ontario, but also across the country. As a champion of thought-provoking, educational documentaries TVO continues to enrich the lives of Ontarians on a daily basis.

In expert appearances before the CRTC, DOC has repeatedly used TVO as a shining example of how Canadian broadcasters can use documentary to offer compelling programming. As one of only *three* remaining provincial public broadcasters in the country, TVO stands out as a rare breed of public broadcasters that addresses audiences as both viewers and citizens, engaging them on a variety of complex social issues.

Were it not for TVO, the highest grossing Canadian documentary of all time, *The Corporation*, would never have seen the light of day. More recently, TVO has commissioned and supported award-winning documentaries such as *The World Before Her* (Documentary Competition Winner, Tribeca Film Festival), *Inside Disaster Haiti*, which followed Ontario members of the Red Cross response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and *Water on the Table*, which explores whether water is a commodity or a basic human right. Its recent series entitled *Mental Health Matters* used a 360° approach that includes broadcast and the Internet in a variety of ways to explore mental health issues and educate Ontarians on a complicated matter.

TVO has recently come under criticism for the educational game *Pipe Trouble*, a companion piece to the documentary *Trouble in the Peace*, about community responses to oil and gas encroachment in the Peace River Valley. As subsequent media reports have revealed, the attacks on *Pipe Trouble* were entirely without basis, originating from individuals who had never played the game and who had taken elements of the game entirely out of context.

DOC has been dismayed at the ill-founded controversy around *Pipe Trouble* and the subsequent attacks on the reputation of the game's creators and supporters. We have the utmost confidence in the rigour the public broadcaster applies to its editorial oversight process. Educational gaming is a strategic way of bringing a complex issue to life, and TVO should be commended for its involvement in a film and game on a timely issue of relevance to all Ontarians and all Canadians.

It bears repeating: TVO is a shining example of a broadcaster dedicated to fully serving its public mandate. For over forty years, TVO has shaped our understanding of Ontario, offering citizens an enlightening and thought-provoking respite from the encroaching media noise.

Minister Sandals, please accept our congratulations on your new role as Ontario's Minister of Education. We look forward to working with you in the months and years to come, and hope you will share our support of TVO and the critical role it plays in educating Ontarians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pepita Ferrari". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being a large, stylized initial.

Pepita Ferrari
Chair

c.c. Mr. Peter O'Brian, Chair, TVO