

Good afternoon Minister Wiseman and fellow concerned citizens. I am here today speaking from the viewpoint of a worker in the provincial Arts community and as the Artistic Managing Director of New Curtain Theatre in Milton-George's Brook.

What I would like to talk about in the time I have centres around equitable maintenance. As everyone knows we are facing hard times. That is true. We are unfortunately going to have to tighten our belts. That is also true. But that does not mean we lose sight of the bigger picture. That we put the brakes on certain things for the time short term. Or that certain sectors of our community, the arts sector, stand by in the sidelines until things get better. This, if implemented, would most definitely, set us back with respect to where we are at present. From our standpoint, we need to ensure that we do not lose momentum to slip back and loose the ground that we have gained over the past 10 years in this area.

Every society needs a strong artistic and cultural economical and ecological element in its infrastructure – that is what makes a community a vibrant and attractive place for people to settle in. Richard Florida has already built the case for this. By decreasing and eliminating the gap between cultural and economic equality we will be achieving what we should as a society. The arts & culture community, as we know, has been an economic driver for decades and as a contributor to the growth of economies and we feel that we need to not be deprived of the opportunity, at this time, to keep making these

contributions to the economy that it has been. If we lose the momentum that we have already started then it will be detrimental not be able to move forward when things do improve down the road. We thus need to be given an ***equitable*** chance to continue to grow the professional arts community in areas outside of St John's region and on a year round basis. NCT is the only professional ***year round*** arts organization in the area and have been operating here for coming up on 10 years next year.

In addition, we need to be able to ***maintain*** our place in the cultural economy. We have nurtured a community here where there was none previous. We start in 2006 with no home venue, producing and hosting events wherever we could find a space to retrofitting our own space at White Hills where we spent 6 years on the outskirts of the town until we made our most recent move to our new location which was clearly a positive move all round. Here now we are working in collaboration with the Community Legacy Foundation and THE HOUSE to build a vibrant arts facility on a year round basis for both local and visiting artists alike

As an arts organization though, we are not solely a seasonal industry as we are primarily for the permanent population. Not only are we an economic amenity that supports the economy but as well, we are an element of the provincial economy that supplies employment to members of the arts community on a year round basis. I spoke earlier of an "equitable approach" and that is the crux of my presentation.

- As has been pointed out NCT is the only professional arts organization that operates on a year round basis outside of the urban boundaries of St John's in this area. Where there has been little in the rural areas previous, we are nurturing an arts appreciative audience and there is gradually more and more are starting to evolve as ours outside the metro area . . . and this is a good thing as it creates and nurtures an equitable access to the arts the non-urban regions of the province putting us on par with our mainland counter-parts.
- In addition, we are also operating as a year round employer to artists to the industry instead of just to the festival season which primarily in the summer months.
- Also, we are an amenity as well that primarily services the resident population of the region as opposed to the transient tourist industry.
- Also we are looking as well to be treated on an equitable basis with other arts organizations in the province, especially where we have discovered organizations that operate 2 months of the year for only ½ the amount of time we have are receiving 2 ½ times the amount of funding.

We therefore hope that when it comes to the distribution of funding our organization here in a major location in the province receives the adequate support it requires and deserves. We thank you at this time for hearing our presentation.