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Sent: August 9, 2022 10:12 AM
To: Minister.Lumsden@ontario.ca
Cc: Julia Merritt; greg.rickford@ontario.ca
Subject: FW: Perth County Information Network - Libraries

August 9, 2022

Hon. Neil Lumsden, MPP
Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sport

Hon. Greg Rickford, MPP
Minister of Indigenous Affairs

Via email

Dear Minister Lumsden and Minister Rickford,

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Perth County Information Network (PCIN), which is a network of libraries from each of the Perth County municipalities in my riding. PCIN provides a unique perspective on the challenges of libraries – especially in rural and northern areas. I appreciate their input.

We discussed how our local libraries pivoted during the pandemic to help people access and print their vaccine passports, while still maintain the services many of my constituents rely on.

PCIN also shared some of their concerns with me regarding funding and the provision of services. They shared with me that libraries have not received an increase in base funding since the 1990's and have had to find additional funding from other avenues to update their inventories and maintain services. As you may know, rural areas and the services provided within them face unique challenges and do not necessarily have access to the same municipal funding larger centres have.

One idea that was suggested, and I thought was interesting, was to create a new and innovative online "Ontario Library" that would pool resources between libraries across Ontario. To complete this however, PCIN suggested they would need the assistance of the provincial government with an investment of \$9 million.

It was also suggested that the Government of Ontario work with Indigenous communities in Ontario to provide and sustain libraries within those areas through a \$2 million investment. The Government of Canada has delayed taking action on this important file, and is an opportunity for Ontario to lead.

PCIN brings a unique perspective to some of these issues, and I wanted to bring these ideas to your attention. I appreciate your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

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Matthew Rae, MPP
Perth-Wellington