



Ottawa, April 15th 2020

The Honourables Bill Morneau, Steven Guilbeault, Navdeep Bains and Catherine McKenna

House of Commons Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

By email

Dear Ministers Morneau, Guilbeault, Bains, and McKenna,

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the Canadian Science Centre sector we are redoubling our efforts to serve our communities even while our facilities are closed. Collectively, the Canadian Science Centre sector **engages 8 million people in person each year and reaches this audience through 1.35 million accounts on social media**, a number that continues to grow during the pandemic. Our sharing of accurate, reliable information has a significant impact, locally, and nationally.

**We are the science champions reaching Canadians in their homes each day during this crisis.**

We are helping Canadians during this pandemic in three key ways:

1. **Planking the Curve:** Playing a key role in planking the curve, by modelling social distancing, delivering reliable science information about COVID-19, and sharing official provincial and federal health recommendations with the public.
2. **Science at Home:** Providing K-12 STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) resources to parents, teachers, and youth to help with the transition to learning from home. Engaging whole families in STEM learning through online platforms and interactive content, including live videos and discussions. Research findings show that growing youth interest in sciences and engineering is tied to programs that aim to increase the comfort level of the entire family (Archer, Dawson, DeWitt, Seakins, & Wong, 2015).
3. **Supporting Canada “After COVID-19”:** Science centres are among the country’s most trusted institutions and play a leading role helping the public adjust to a ‘new normal’. In addition, the Canadian Science Centre sector can help stimulate the economy during and post COVID-19 through capital projects, many of which were started before the crisis.

Despite the immediate **loss of revenue of over \$3 million dollars a week during building closures**, science centres are rising to the occasion and engaging their communities. In anticipation of further economic stimulus legislation, we request the inclusion of the following measures to help our continuing efforts to “plank the curve”, deliver science at home, and support Canada post COVID-19:

- **Create an Emergency Development Fund for online science and innovation engagement**
- **Adopt a temporary “universal charitable deduction”**
- **Support building upkeep and maintenance**
- **Develop payment deferral and emergency assistance**



**Details of recommendations for economic stimulus legislation** to support the Canadian Science Centre Sector, including science and technology centres, science museums, children's museums, natural history museums, planetariums, aquariums, zoos, not for profit STEM organizations, and makerspaces:

- **Create an Emergency Development Fund for online science and innovation engagement.** With the transition to online engagement, new expenses are being incurred at a time when revenue losses are high. This fund would support the science centre sector to invest in appropriate technology, platforms, and capacity building to support the development, production, and delivery of reliable content that families, youth, and teachers need.
- **To adopt a temporary increase to the Charitable Donation Tax Credit (currently 15-29%)** to help incentivize charitable giving, which is expected to decline in the months ahead. Creating a "COVID-19 Super Credit", would help ensure communities are able to support their local science centres and all charities suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **To support building upkeep and maintenance:** Greatly reduce (50%+) water, gas and electricity bills for both commercial operations and for private residences, as both businesses and workers are impacted by the COVID-19 shut downs and layoffs.
- **Develop payment deferral for science centres** for an indefinite period. Consideration of debt relief measures as the science centre sector works to begin operations after COVID-19 related closures. Financial aid to relieve science centre debts acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - We recognize that on Friday March 27th the government of Canada announced that SMEs (including not for profit organizations) will have access to \$40,000 in interest free loans, with a quarter of this loan (up to \$10,000) being eligible for complete forgiveness. We further recommend that a greater percentage (up to 50% at 20,000) be eligible for complete forgiveness.
- **To provide emergency assistance** when the 60-day Employment Insurance window closes. At that time, individual support may cease for our workers, and science centres will need to start to ramp up for opening in new ways.

Science centres are community anchors, addressing challenges in times of crisis like the one we are currently experiencing. **In a time of global change, CASC is a foundational network that can be leveraged to fuel movements and empower collective action across intergenerational audiences.** We are trusted institutions who share the government's dedication to the wellbeing of all Canadians. We thank you for giving these recommendations your urgent attention. We invite your response and are here to assist in any way that we can in supporting the science centre sector, and the Canadian public at large.

Sincerely,

Tracy Calogheros  
President  
Canadian Association of Science Centres

Marianne Mader  
Executive Director  
Canadian Association of Science Centres

# OUR IMPACT



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE CENTRES  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES CENTRES DE SCIENCES

## LEADING THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT

### CULTIVATING A STRONG SCIENCE CULTURE



Sustaining interest & engagement in science through an individual's lifetime <sup>1</sup>



Increasing engagement with and interest in science as a school subject <sup>2</sup>

### INCREASING SCIENCE LITERACY



Demonstrating how science impacts an individual's life



Expanding science & technology knowledge and understanding <sup>2</sup>

### CONNECTING SCIENCE AND SOCIETY



Providing ideal locations to share research activities by Canadian scientists



Breaking down barriers between science & general public

## OUR AUDIENCE



32% Children



21% Youths



42% Adults



5% Seniors

## OUR REACH

70+

Organizations engaging the public in science from coast to coast to coast



Over 700,000 Students



8 MILLION Visitors Annually



Over 10,000 Volunteers

<sup>1</sup> Council of Canadian Academies. "Science Culture: Where Canada Stands." Report in Focus.  
<sup>2</sup> John Falk et al. "International Science Centre Impact Study." ISCS Final Report.