



12 February 2026

The Honourable Marc Miller
Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Miller,

I am writing to you in my capacity as president of the Canadian Historical Association | Société historique du Canada. The members of our association have been distressed to see the recent news about cutbacks in a number of federal government units that are very important to all Canadians who are interested in the history of our country: Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian War Museum, Parks Canada, and Statistics Canada. Although we may not have access to all the precise data, we fear that the cutbacks have fallen disproportionately on these agencies, which share a role in creating and maintaining records and providing access to knowledge about Canadian history. I note that the recent cuts to Library and Archives Canada amplify the impact of the earlier reductions in the autumn.

I am sure that you are aware of the key roles these agencies play in encouraging interest in Canadian history. At this particular juncture in the history of our country, active engagement with the complicated Canadian past is more necessary than ever. Canadians need to understand, for example, the features of our past that distinguish us from our neighbours to the south and that have led us to adopt different paths to our concepts of citizenship, democracy, and civic engagement.

Reducing the capacity of agencies of the federal government to help those of us who value the study of history is particularly dangerous when decisions at the provincial level have exacerbated the difficulties of teaching young Canadians about our history. University- and college-level History departments continue to shrink, at a time when increasing attention to critical issues such as the history of residential schools, the roles of women and LGBTQ+ individuals, and the ongoing challenges faced by racialized members of Canadian society are receiving more attention than they ever have in the past. Simply put, the number of specialists in Canadian history continues to diminish at a time when it ought to be growing.

While we cannot expect the federal government to address problems at the provincial level, in your role as Minister of Canadian Heritage, we hope that we can count on you to advocate on behalf of all Canadians to maintain and enhance the role of agencies that collect data and records and make them accessible to broad publics. We recognise that the country faces many current challenges, but we do not want short-sighted decisions to have long-lasting effects on the future study of the country. This is particularly the case with Statistics Canada and its essential work in acquiring useful data which allow governments to make evidence-driven decisions about social and economic programs.

I note that Prime Minister Carney appealed to an understanding of Canadian history in his recent speech in Québec City as a way of establishing the context for current decisions about the many threats that our country faces. Engagement with the history of the country is vital.

We hope that the recognition of the importance of our country's history will be reflected in budgetary decisions that affect the agencies that promote citizens' knowledge of and engagement with our past.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin M. Coates', written in a cursive style.

Colin M. Coates
President, Canadian Historical Association | Société historique du Canada