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Dismayed by severe budget cuts to Ontario Library Services

OUR READERS WRITE

The following letter is addressed directly to Minister of Culture, Tourism and Sport Michael Tibollo.

It was with deep dismay, that we were informed today that because of the severe budget cuts (50%) to the Ontario Library Services ? North and South, that this would immediately end the Interlibrary loan service to our patrons. Clearly, there is little understanding on the part of your Ministry as to the severe impact this will have on small and rural libraries. Due to limited resources for this segment of the Public Library sector, we rely heavily on meeting our patrons` needs through the opportunity of being able to access and borrow on their behalf, materials from other libraries. Effectively, this will create a hardship and contrary to your statement will impact day-to-day operations at our library.

Last month, the over 500 Interlibrary transactions at our library reflect about 15% of our total monthly circulation and will leave 500 patrons disenfranchised. This is not insignificant and does dramatically undermine the quality library service we have been providing.

Public library services epitomize value for taxpayers' money spent. They provide an equitable learning and societal benefit for all citizens in Ontario. It would be unfortunate that this recent effort at budget cutting affects very vulnerable members of our society - the children, the seniors, recent immigrants, and the poverty stricken members who are the ones most in need of the support that public libraries provide.

I do hope that you reconsider and find some other means to fund necessary services. As CEO of a small, rural library, I would be very happy to speak with you in a consultative way to ensure deeper understanding of these issues.

Rose Dotten

CAO, Shelburne Public Library