



For Immediate Release

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Budget defunds Nova Scotia books, authors, publishers, booksellers

This year's provincial budget is defunding Nova Scotia books.

The Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage sent letters yesterday informing Nova Scotia publishers that it is eliminating a \$700,000 fund that helps local publishers publish new books by local authors.

"It's drastic and devastating," says Nimbus manager Terrilee Bulger. "Books are an important pillar of our culture. This budget decision by Premier Tim Houston's government will mean that fewer Nova Scotian creators will get their books published. Not only that, Nova Scotian publishers will be forced to lay off staff, and spend less on local freelancers."

Nova Scotia publishers release more than 100 new books, most by local authors, every year.

"We need a government that will defend Nova Scotia books, not defund them," adds Bulger. "New books are vital for local booksellers and their business. They bring people to public libraries too."

Nova Scotia's Publisher Assistance Program parallels similar funding available to locally owned publishers in all nine other provinces. Nova Scotia's program was already less generous than in most other provinces.

"This budget cut will make Nova Scotia the only province to cancel support for publishing books that is the backbone of our entire industry," she adds.

Among the other publishing companies affected are Breton Books, MacIntyre Purcell Publishing, Formac Publishing, Pottersfield Press, Conundrum Press, and Fernwood Publishing.

“Without this provincial support, we’ll have to cut new titles from 15 to 7,” says Formac CEO Jim Lorimer. “Books won’t get written, they won’t get published, and they won’t be there for readers to enjoy.”

"It's a small, proud, and diverse industry, encompassing everything from graphic novels to children's books to scholarly works, employing local artists, authors, staff, and more," states Jeff Cox, President of MacIntyre Purcell Publishing. "Removing 100% of provincial support leaves Nova Scotia as the **ONLY** province in Canada that does not support its book publishers and authors."

Lesley Choyce, prolific author and the Publisher of Pottersfield Press states: “Since Pottersfield Press was founded in 1978, provincial publishing support has allowed us to publish a wide range of Nova Scotia authors that includes Maxine Tynes, George Elliott Clarke, Joan Baxter, Rita Joe, Harry Bruce and at least 100 others, many of whom were first time authors. The loss of the Publishers Assistance Fund will be devastating to the continued growth of culture in the province and silence many new creative voices that need to be heard.”

The publishers are hoping that Premier Tim Houston and Finance and Treasury Board Minister John Lohr will remember the lessons of the disastrous film tax debacle created by the previous government more than 10 years ago.

“One of Tim Houston’s best qualities as a leader is that he has the courage to listen and the courage to change a government decision,” notes Bulger. “I am hopeful that he will consider the damage this budget decision will have on local book publishers, and the broader Nova Scotian cultural economy.”

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