

## News Release

### Resolution on library funding goes to Union of British Columbia Municipalities

NANAIMO, July 5, 2012 – A resolution from the Board of Trustees for Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) was passed unanimously by members of the British Columbia Library Trustees Association at their recent Annual General Meeting.

The resolution concerning the disappearance of designated public library funding in the 2012/2013 budget of the provincial government has been accepted into the voting package for September's convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

"While the government has provided verbal assurances that funds will be allocated to the public library sector over the next three fiscal years, these assurances are not supported by legislation and are not articulated in any budget document," says Ronna-Rae Leonard, Chair of the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees. "This absorption of library funding into the overall Education Programs budget is a concern for public library users, supporters and leaders."

Public libraries are so much more than simply education. Public libraries are vital assets to their communities. Research by the [National Adult Literacy Database](#) shows that strong public libraries are the cornerstone of any strong and healthy community. Public libraries also support the local economy. They contribute to the economic well-being of the businesses that surround them. Public libraries offer Canadians highly skilled and often highly technical jobs in an automated world.

"The Board of Vancouver Island Regional Library is asking all library trustees in B.C. to inform and educate members of their local governments and regional districts about this resolution. Our Board is asking for delegates' support at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities convention in September," concludes VIRL Board Chair Ronna-Rae Leonard.

Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) is the fourth largest library system in British Columbia. We serve over 417,000 people on Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, and Bella Coola on the Central Coast through 38 branch libraries, a virtual branch, and a books by mail service. VIRL's holdings number over 993,000 and include books, magazines, CD's and DVD's. Administrative offices are located in Nanaimo.

- 30 -

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Port Alberni Port Alice Port Clements Port Hardy Port McNeill Port Renfrew Quadra Island Qualicum Beach Queen Charlotte  
Sandspit Sayward Sidney/North Saanich Sointula Sooke South Cowichan Tahsis Tofino Ucluelet Union Bay Woss

-2-

### Background from the British Columbia Library Trustees Association

British Columbia has maintained one of the best library systems in Canada due to the hard work and diligence of a partnership which includes the provincial government, the municipalities and regional districts, the staff and volunteers of the libraries and the electorate.

There is concern about the Ministry of Education's decision to subsume the \$14 million provincial library budget line item into the overall education budget. This action appears to be at odds with the government's stated goals of accountability and transparency. It has also created uncertainty about future provincial library support, since the lack of a separate line item for library funding makes the assurance of future funding much more tenuous.

The resolution being submitted to the September 2012 AGM of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) reads as follows:

WHEREAS the libraries in British Columbia are important to the quality of life, lifelong learning and social fabric of the communities throughout the province of British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Education's decision to subsume the provincial library budget line item into the overall education budget threatens the stability of future funding:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities strongly advocate that the Provincial Government specifically recognize the broader mandate of libraries in British Columbia and reinstate the line item in the provincial budget.

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