



November 8, 2012

Sent Via Email to: exc@toronto.ca

Executive Committee Secretariat
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**Re: Executive Committee Item EX24.8 – Future of the Three Major Civic Theatres -
Directions Resulting from REOI No. 9101-12-7008**

I am writing to express concern and dismay regarding the *“Report on the Future of the Three Major Civic Theatres”* and specifically the results of the Report as it relates to the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts.

The Report’s conclusion that the Sony Centre should be divested by the City fails to acknowledge the significant contribution that the Sony Centre makes to the fabric of Toronto. You only have to stand under the marquee or view the in-house video displays to be reminded that the Sony Centre is a rich historic venue but, most importantly, it is the only venue that strives to programme artistic performances from around the world to honour the thousands of people from multiple cultures that have come to call Toronto their home.

The City should continue to fund the Centre’s great work.

If however the City decides that, despite the good work the Centre does, it should not receive taxpayer dollars, at the very least, any divestment to a third party should require that the venue sensibly continue to be run not only as a theatre but a theatre whose primary mandate is the presentation of multicultural programming. The Report’s reference to divest the theatre for some sort of “adaptive reuse” would run the risk of losing the one venue in the City that unites and celebrates all of our cultures on a grand scale. It would be disgraceful for our City, which prides itself on being the most multicultural city in the world, to even be seen as considering this as a viable option. It would be a betrayal and waste of tax dollars considering that massive effort and recent overhaul.

I have found that the Centre’s staff to be so dedicated in the face of such an impending cloud of being dismantled. They are striving every minute to uphold a proud and diverse venue. It is but a scant period of time since they were darkened during the re-fit and attachment of the condo project, I wonder if the City were to face such past impediments and future barriers, would they not have folded their tent and gone home?



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In our rush to the future, let us not cast aside our history or ignore the immense opportunity to recognize and broaden cultural diversity that is our ever changing global city. I for one hope you will strengthen the mandate of the Sony Centre which is the mirror image of our motto “Diversity Our Strength.”

I urge the Executive Committee to:

1. reject the Report's recommendation to divest the Sony Centre or at the very least
2. amend the Report to:
 - a. eliminate the possibility of “adaptive reuse”
 - b. require that the theatre be maintained as such and
 - c. require that any divestiture be made only to a third party who would commit to continue the Centre's multicultural programming mandate that has come to perfectly exemplify the very essence of what makes Toronto so unique throughout the world.

Sincerely,

John Cunningham
Business Agent
SEIU Local 2 BGPWU

cc: Executive Committee Members

Mayor Rob Ford (Chair)
Councillor Paul Ainslie
Councillor Michelle Berardinetti
Councillor Mike Del Grande
Councillor Doug Holyday
Councillor Norman Kelly
Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti
Councillor Peter Milczyn
Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong
Councillor Cesar Palacio
Councillor Jaye Robinson
Councillor David Shiner
Councillor Michael Thompson