



Deputation to Toronto City Council Executive Committee
R: Toronto Public Library Budget

November 29, 2013

Councillor Ainslie, honourable members of the Executive Committee, and Nancy Marshall,

The PLG-GTA is submitting this deputation to urge the City of Toronto to renew its commitment to the Toronto Public Library. Please demonstrate your support for this popular and valuable service by voting against any proposed service or budgetary cuts.

The Progressive Librarians Guild is a group of Toronto-area library workers who are concerned with social justice and equality issues. The group is a new voice in the Canadian library community seeking to influence progressive dialogue and political action in our communities and associations. Our members work in different types of libraries across the city and at different levels within organizations, a diversity that has allowed us to gain perspective about the repercussions of cuts on library users, workers, and management. While we understand the challenge of allocating budgets to the neglected infrastructure of other important services, any cuts made to the TPL will have far-reaching repercussions beyond the library walls.

The public library is the first place many newcomers to the city seek out when they need resources and information. The public library is a place where those who are unable to afford or access technology can write cover letters and apply for jobs. Libraries provide an environment where neighbours and strangers can exchange ideas, cooking tips, or legal advice. It is a place where those who do not feel safe or wanted are accepted, where they can access information services and programs. What other place does all of these things? For everyone. For free.

We urge the City of Toronto to continue its investment in the great intellectual infrastructure that is North America's busiest library system. The Toronto Public Library system boasted 19 million visits a last year, and had the highest circulation and visits per capita when compared to other large urban systems such as those in New York and Los Angeles¹. With this kind of profile and activity it is clearly a key resource for the citizens of Toronto.

Please approach the upcoming budget negotiations with the intention to preserve the library system as a vital resource for residents of our city.

Sincerely,

The Progressive Librarian Guild, Toronto Area Chapter

¹ <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2012/apr30/13.pdf>