

March 16, 2018

Executive Committee
City of Toronto
exc@toronto.ca

Re: 32.4, Third Party Sign Tax - Review and Proposed Amendments

Dear Mayor Tory, Members of Executive Committee:

As you consider Executive Committee Agenda item 32.4, I am writing to remind you of the very strong rationale for the introduction of the tax, a rationale that continues to be relevant today.

Susan Crocker
Chair

Nova Bhattacharya
President

Karen Tisch
Past-President

Claire Hopkinson
Director and CEO

Board of Directors

Susan Crocker, Chair
Nova Bhattacharya, President
Andrew Walker, Secretary
Harold Chmara, Treasurer
Gary Crawford, Councillor
Joe Cressy, Councillor
John Fillion, Councillor
Paula Fletcher, Councillor
Mary Fragedakis, Councillor
Kelvin Browne
Aileen Carroll
Neera Chopra
Cara Eastcott
Charles Falzon
Dina Graser
Josh Grossman
Lauren Howes
Louis Laberge-Côté
Richard Lee
Rob MacKinnon
Devon Ostrom
Soheil Parsa
Anthony Sargent
Gaëtane Verna
Jesse Wente
Gein Wong
Alissa York
Maayan Ziv

Revenues from the billboard tax have provided an essential catalyst for increased investment in Toronto's arts sector. Since the final ratification of the billboard tax in 2012, City Council has increased its funding of the arts by a total of \$17.5 million annually. Toronto Arts Council specifically has seen an increase of \$8 million to our grants budget. These funds have had a major impact on the life and vibrancy of the city, by supporting over 1,000 arts organizations and individual artists, which annually present:

- 19,500 performances, exhibitions & events in all 44 wards of Toronto
- Attended by 9.5 million people
- Earning \$60 million in ticket sales
- Raising \$52.3 million private sector support
- Employing 17,500 artists
- Encouraging 26,000 volunteers to donate over 540,000 hours

Enhanced support for the arts offers the public a tangible benefit in exchange for their contribution of public space to private advertising. Unlike radio, tv or newspapers, billboards do not provide any additional content in exchange for advertising and offer no public benefit. The tax creates the opportunity for the city to provide public benefit including increased arts funding.

Beautifulcity.ca, an organization founded to support the billboard tax, consistently found through years of surveys and public opinion polling that the public supports a billboard tax.

Toronto Arts Council, our associated artists and volunteers support the continued collection of revenues for the city through the billboard tax.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or would like any additional information.

Yours truly,


Claire Hopkinson, MSM
Director & CEO