July 9, 2026

Hon. Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Hon. Maninder Sidhu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of International Trade
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Re: Seizing the Moment – Building Canada's Cultural, Creative, and Tourism Economy for Global Competitiveness

Dear Ministers Miller and Sidhu,

On behalf of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and its Arts, Culture, and Tourism (ACT) Working Group, representing leading stakeholders from across the arts, culture, tourism, and creative industries, I am writing to urge the government to seize a generational opportunity to strengthen one of the nation's most strategic economic assets.

As Canada enters a new era of nation-building, economic renewal and global competition for talent, investment and trade, its cultural, creative, and tourism sectors can play an increasingly important role in driving growth, jobs, and investment, while strengthening both our local communities and our global competitiveness.

Investments in arts, culture, and creative industries generate lasting intellectual property, global recognition, and sustained economic returns. Canada's cultural and creative economy contributes over $75 billion (2024) to the national GDP, creating nearly 700,000 jobs, with Ontario being the largest contributor (45 per cent). Canada's tourism sector generates over $50.8 billion in GDP (2024), and $129 billion in revenue distributed in communities of all sizes across Canada.

However, historic underinvestment, lack of marketing and promotion supports for international market access, infrastructure limitations, and misalignment of policy and demand hinder the growth potential of both sectors.

Advancing cultural sovereignty in Canada requires more than funding; it requires alignment between cultural policy, trade, tourism, digital strategy, and economic development, while ensuring creative growth is inclusive, sustainable, and competitive.

Canada's Competitive Cultural Advantage – Trade and Global Positioning

When Canada spotlights its stories internationally, the world watches. In 2023, cultural exports totalled over $27 billion (2023), a 10.3 per cent increase from 2021. Intellectual-property (IP) driven sub-domains such as crafts, film, music, and design generated the largest export value, highlighting the economic growth potential when ownership is retained, while supporting a sustainable workforce.

We commend the federal government's leadership in making the Creative Export Strategy permanent, with multi-year, increased, and sustained funding. This reflects a commitment to investing in export projects, trade missions and targeted industry events abroad, and to support creative businesses and SMEs with export-related guidance and information. However, to continue providing a platform for Canadian stories, there must be pathways to creating, monetizing, and sharing cultural IP through a formal strategy, including provisions around the use of AI and emerging technologies to enhance – not replace - creativity.

To make Canada an international destination for arts, culture, tourism, and the creative industries, while exporting its stories, talent, and services globally, we recommend the following priorities:

Recommendations:

- Develop a coordinated federal cultural strategy that embeds the sector in economic action plans, including trade and export priorities.
- Increase capacity and resources for federal agencies and crown corporations (e.g., Global Affairs Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage) to increase support to exports, marketing and promotion.
- Collaborate with other orders of government to enhance Canada's global competitiveness and attract international investment in the culture and tourism sector. This can be achieved through:
    - Trade missions;
    - Marketing campaigns;
    - Cultural delegations and showcases (e.g., international arts festivals, expos, and biennales);
    - Trade shows and Business-to-Business (B2B) marketplaces; and
    - Accelerator and incubator programs.
- Consult on updates to intellectual property (IP) and copyright laws to enhance protections for culture sector workers and their products/goods, considering recent developments

around AI-assisted and AI-generated works, (e.g., using an artist's likeness, digital replicas, etc.).

Building Canada's Cultural Sovereignty Through Data and Regional Economies

Visitors travel from around the world to experience Canadian cultural content. Ontario boasts a particularly rich ecosystem thriving in talent, representing diverse communities and stories. In 2023, for example, the Stratford Festival generated over $276 million in economic impact, with $147.3 million spent locally, including $24.4 million at restaurants, while employing more than 1,400 people across the region.

We see the multiplier effect of culture and tourism in Canada's live music scene, with company operations and tourism spending related to Canadian live music estimated to be $10.92 billion (2023), helping build local, regional, and national pride and identity. Cultural experiences such as festivals, concerts, events, and exhibitions also foster inclusion, self-expression and cohesion; close to two in three culture-goers say that attending arts and cultural events positively (30 per cent) or somewhat positively (33 per cent) impact their sense of belonging, and 75 per cent of Ontarians believe that the arts are important to their mental health.

However, many challenges remain. Access to real-time data on Canada's cultural sector remains limited. Rural, remote, northern, and Indigenous communities lack cultural infrastructure and investment, and recent changes to immigration policy have made it more difficult for smaller communities to attract and retain talent. Strengthening Canada's cultural sovereignty therefore requires a stronger focus on regional economic growth. We we recommend the following priorities:

Recommendations:

- Expand existing data repositories (e.g., Culture Satellite Account) to be more frequent and inform better decision-making. Following the design of successful systems such as the Canadian Tourism Data Collective, this should include:
    - Regional economic impact;
    - Workforce statistics and trends that align with provincial and territorial ridings;
    - Demographics and composition by region, including data on representation from equity-deserving, immigrant, and Indigenous communities; and,
    - Areas of underinvestment.
- Invest in new and existing purpose-built cultural infrastructure, such as art centres, museums, sound stages, and multi-use spaces.
- Leverage and fund third-party expertise and resources (e.g., employment services organizations, business associations, and community groups) to help address labour gaps.
- Support collaborative workforce development initiatives by partnering with educational institutions and industry to mobilize youth talent.

As global competition for cultural content, talent, and investment intensifies, and trade uncertainty grows, Canada has a critical opportunity to strengthen its cultural sovereignty and global voice. Storytelling is not only a cultural asset, but also a powerful economic driver that fuels opportunity.

We welcome the opportunity to advance these recommendations and look forward to working with you to strengthen Canada's global competitiveness in arts, culture, tourism, and the creative industries.

Sincerely,

Daniel Tisch, APR, FCPRS, ICD.D
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce

CC:
The Hon. Rechie Valdez, P.C., M.P., Minister of Women and Gender Equality, and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism)
The Hon. Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario