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**Subject:** Update: Federal support for heritage may be coming

**From:** Paul Gravett [mailto:pgravett@heritagebc.ca]

**Sent:** February 13, 2018 12:17 PM

**To:** Paul Gravett

**Subject:** Update: Federal support for heritage may be coming

Greetings,

Heritage BC has been working with the National Trust to keep heritage front and centre as the federal government considers its role in protecting heritage.

You may remember we asked you to voice your support for Bill C-323. BC spoke up strongly (more than any other province, so I am told), but the Bill was eventually defeated.

However, the House of the Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (ENVI) recently released the report: *Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow* ([found here](#))\*. This report is being met with great interest from heritage organizations, volunteers, charities, professionals, provincial, territorial and municipal policymakers, and property owners who invest in or care for heritage places in British Columbia and across Canada.

There is great potential in the report and Heritage BC continues to bring attention to its important recommendations. Today, **we wrote to all BC Members of Parliament** asking them to take action. (More details are found below.)

We are now asking you to help this effort. It is important our voices are heard, so that we may maintain the visibility of heritage at this critical time.

Please meet with or write to your Member of Parliament. You will [find your MP's contact information here](#).

If you are writing, the Trust has already prepared sample letters for you. To make your letter more powerful, include information about endangered heritage in your federal constituency. The template letters can be downloaded with these links:

- [Liberal MP](#)
- [Conservative MP](#)
- [NDP MP](#)

If you are meeting with your MP, you will find tips to help you [here](#) and [here](#).

Finally, please share this information with your colleagues. The Members of Parliament across the parties have taken notice of heritage. This is a critical time when we must remind our federal politicians of the contributions of heritage in your communities.

Thank you for your efforts. Please let me know what action you take and we will report back to the National Trust.

Best regards,

Paul Gravett  
Executive Director  
Heritage BC

\* provided under separate cover

## SAMPLE LETTER AND INFORMATION

**Subject: Request to Meet - Key Implications for [Insert your riding here] of ENVI Report #10, *Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow***

Dear [Insert MP's name here]:

I am writing in response to the House of the Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (ENVI) report *Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow*.

This report is being met with great interest from heritage organizations, volunteers, charities, professionals, provincial, territorial and municipal policymakers, and property owners who invest in or care for heritage places in British Columbia and across Canada.

In the course of the study, the Committee heard that historic places are more than just touchstones of history and identity: **heritage places are instrumental in building the economy of tomorrow, creating skilled, green jobs for young people, and growing the middle class**. Further, as a member of a party that has championed substantial initiatives on the environment and climate change, you will know that **the renewal and re-use of buildings capitalizes on materials and energy already invested, reduces construction and demolition waste, and avoids the carbon and other environmental impacts associated with new development**.

Heritage-related tourism is estimated to bring to British Columbia nearly \$32 million dollars each year. This, in turn, generates nearly \$57 million dollars in further spending and contributions, including \$27 million dollars to BC's GDP. A further \$5.5 million dollars is transferred to municipal, provincial and federal governments as taxes.

Heritage extends beyond these impressive numbers. It represents legacy and meaning, which contribute to the economy, social well-being and the revitalization of our province's communities. Heritage provides understanding, training and education of our history. It describes and defines British Columbia's identity and past, while shaping and informing our future.

We can find examples of these values in every corner of B.C. The rejuvenation of the North Pacific Cannery, a national historic site and museum and legacy of BC's fisheries identity, supported jobs creation in a remote community and developed a workforce with specialized, transferrable skills. A train station in Dunster, located in the Robson Valley and brought back to life by tradespeople and volunteers, is now a local hub of commerce and community. The rehabilitation of Rocheleau Cottage, in the historic Francophone community of Maillardville, has led to much-needed family housing and densification in an urban setting.

*Preserving Canada's Heritage* contains a comprehensive set of 17 recommendations for action that would transform Canada's historic places, their owners and stewards, and the people who care about them – whether they are in the hands of governments or Band Councils, private sector owners, not-for-profit organizations or charities. The Report also contains many laudable recommendations to get the federal house in order and to show national leadership through exemplary handling of the federal government's own heritage property portfolio.

Over 1,000 Canadians have already endorsed the following statement of priorities for federal action on historic places, and more continue to sign on:

***I\* Il request that priority be given to measures that would have the most tangible and immediate positive impact for the greatest number of rural and urban places in Canada, and a proven spin-off effect for the environment and our economy:***

- A. Measures that would encourage private sector investment in the revitalization of historic places that matter in our communities; and**
- B. Measures that help fund the efforts of Indigenous peoples, charities and not-for-profits to save and renew places of significance.**

**Proven measures include grants and contributions, tax-based incentives, and "heritage first" leasing and investment policies.**

Accordingly, we urge you to take action on the corresponding recommendations found in *Preserving Canada's Heritage*:

- Recommendation 11 – Establishing a tax credit for the restoration and preservation of buildings listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places;
- Recommendation 10 – Funding for the National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places to a minimum of \$10 million per year;
- Recommendations 15 & 17 – Supporting an Indigenous-led initiative to protect and preserve places important to them, including the legacy of residential schools; and
- Recommendation 8 – Requiring federal departments/agencies to give preference to existing heritage buildings when considering leasing or purchasing space.

We also point out that Recommendation 11, calling for income tax measures for historic places, represents an opportunity to incentivize investment in historic places without a negative impact on the Government's financial framework. As reported in the ENVI study, the US Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program returns between \$1.20 and \$1.25 to the federal government for every dollar of tax credit invested. Such measures have long-standing widespread support in Canada: from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada; 58 Canadian municipalities who passed resolutions or expressed support for federal income tax measures for historic places; and hundreds of individuals who have written letters and met with their MPs.

Recommendation 11 is consistent with the Liberal Party of Canada's willingness to consider financial incentives for historic places, expressed in an October 2015 pre-election message to the heritage sector. Responding to written questions from the National Trust for Canada, Liberal Party president Anna Gainey wrote: *"A Liberal government will work in collaboration with the heritage sector and other stakeholders to examine measures that promote the preservation and rehabilitation of Canada's heritage buildings. We are open to measures that use the tax system that stimulate private investments in heritage buildings."*

Support for federal tax measures for Canada's historic places was echoed in ENVI's Report #9 – Bill C-323 – An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (rehabilitation of historic property): "The Committee is supportive of the principle of Bill C-323 and believes that financial incentives, including tax credits, which encourage investment in the rehabilitation of historic properties and heritage places is necessary [...]"

We encourage you to support the investment in the revitalization of historic places (particularly tax-based incentives and grants/contributions), and to fund the efforts of Indigenous peoples, charities, and not-for-profits to save and regenerate places of significance in your riding.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues.

Yours sincerely,