



Associated  
Designers of  
Canada

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2

Via email: [justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca)

March 25, 2020

Dear Prime Minister:

The Associated Designers of Canada (ADC) is one of the country's oldest arts service organizations and is officially recognized under the Federal Status of the Artist Act as the representative of all designers for live performance throughout Canada (outside Quebec).

The ADC would like to thank you for your dedicated response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping Canadians safe must be your first priority and we applaud your actions to this end. However, as a result of these extraordinary measures, and due to the already challenging financial realities of performing arts designers, we have entered a time of extreme economic uncertainty. This uncertainty has the potential to leave lasting and catastrophic effects in the arts sector.

The ADC understands and appreciates that the emergency measures taken by the government are necessary. We are however also critically aware of the particularly catastrophic impacts to the arts, culture, and tourism sectors these measures have. Our industry cannot just open our doors again as soon as the restrictions are lifted, the same way you can re-open a clothing store. It will take months to rebuild and restart our sector and will result in many more months of unemployment for artists and cultural workers.

For many members of our sector, the spring months are a key time for their work: many producers are cancelling the end of their spring seasons, and large summer festivals are considering cancellations. As a consequence, we are estimating that the economic impact on the livelihoods for the majority of designers in this country is likely to be equivalent to at least 50% of their annual income.

Designers are not classified as employees and therefore not eligible for EI benefits for any loss of work due to COVID-19. We appreciate the government for exploring and implementing measures to support freelance Canadian workers through the EI Emergency Support Benefit program announced

last week. This support, however, will not sustain the members of our sector for what we anticipate to be a full six month cessation of live performing arts work – and possibly longer.

As a result of the concentration of work opportunity in the live performance industry, many designers live in Canada's largest and most expensive cities. This exacerbates the immediacy of the financial crisis for these designers in this already vulnerable sector.

We urge all levels of government to provide the supports necessary to ensure that, once this pandemic has passed, all Canadians will once again benefit from a strong and healthy cultural sector.



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