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Re. Budgetary cuts to Heritage and Culture Department in Norfolk County

I wish this letter to be a matter of public record.

As President of the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO), I am writing to you regarding the recent announcement by Norfolk County to cut approximately \$200,000 from the budget of the Heritage and Culture Department in 2021. This announcement follows cuts in 2020, whereby the Heritage and Culture Department's budget was slashed by \$237,000. Cumulatively, this represents a cut of over 31% to the Heritage and Culture budget since the beginning of this council's term.

As a network representing over 350 archival institutions and information professionals, the AAO recognizes the importance of programs that support culture, history, heritage. The Ontario government defines culture as the "lifeblood of a vibrant society, expressed in the many ways we tell our stories, celebrate, remember the past, entertain ourselves, and imagine the future." By cutting the budget of Norfolk County's Heritage and Culture Department, Norfolk County Council has effectively hindered the Heritage and Cultural Department's ability to preserve individual and collective identity. The vital resources that are protected by the Heritage and Cultural Department have the unique ability to unite people within Norfolk County, help to foster an understanding of the County's place within Ontario, and by drawing others in to understand our collective history, these resources encourage community growth, drive tourism, and support critical job creation.

I call on Council to defend Norfolk County's Heritage and Culture by reversing the decision to cut funding to the organizations that do the most to preserve history, promote community, and build on the identity of Norfolk County.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Grant
President, Archives Association of Ontario