

Hon. Caroline Di Cocco
Minister of Culture
5th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

April 10, 2007

Dear Minister Di Cocco,

I'm writing on behalf of ACTRA Toronto Performers in response to your letter, dated March 30, 2007, regarding the *Status of Ontario's Artists Act*.

We acknowledge that with this Act, the Government of Ontario has begun to recognize the contribution of artists to Ontario's economy and quality of life. However, we are disappointed that the Act does not go further and actually deliver tangible benefits for artists.

Throughout the consultation process by the Status of the Artist Sub-committee of your Advisory Council for Arts and Culture, and in discussions with you and other MPPs, ACTRA has presented a measured set of proposals that would make a meaningful difference to the lives of artists. We gave careful consideration to our proposals as they were drafted. We wanted to present items that could be delivered by the government. In short, we wanted to make your job of living up to your commitment to Status of the Artist legislation easy.

When we saw the report from the Status of the Artist Sub-committee, we were pleased to see reference to many of our suggestions in the recommendations. The sub-committee's recommendations included:

- Legislated measures to provide standard protection for children.
- A range of tax benefits for artists including tax credits, PST and other tax exemptions and a system of income tax averaging.
- The provision of new sustainable funding for housing programs that benefit artists.
- That the Ministry of Culture work with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to develop apprenticeship and training opportunities specifically for artists
- The establishment of a time-limited process to work towards consensus on an improved collective bargaining framework for Ontario artists.

The Status of Ontario's Artists Act, as presented, fulfills none of these recommendations. Various announcements are promised over the coming weeks and I look forward to hearing what they contain, but in terms of actual legislation this Act needs to be amended substantially if it is to have any meaningful impact on the lives of Ontario artists. Some of these amendments could be done quite easily. For example, ACTRA has been deeply involved in the development of guidelines for child performers through the Ministry of Labour and the Section 21 Film and Television Health and Safety Committee. The work has been done – the guidelines just need to become the law.

ACTRA would be happy to work with your office to develop amendments to your proposed Act. Together we could work toward something you can actually present to artists and say, truthfully, that you have lived up to your commitment to enact Status of the Artist legislation. Please feel free to contact me if we can be of any help.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Heather Allin
Vice-president, ACTRA Toronto

cc. Karl Pruner, President, ACTRA Toronto