

**Submitted to:**

**The Honourable Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia**

**The Honourable John Lohr, Minister of Finance**

**The Honourable Dave Ritcey, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage**

**The Honourable Colton LeBlanc, Minister of Growth and Development**

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Dear Premier Houston and Ministers Lohr, Ritcey, and LeBlanc,

Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC), representing 1,700 individual members and 24,000 workers in the urban core of our capital city, would like to express our concern and opposition to the devastating cuts that the provincial government has proposed to the arts, cultural, and event sectors in the current budget.

We understand the challenging fiscal climate that we are in as a province and appreciate that difficult decisions need to be made. We also appreciate the articulation of Nova Scotia's focus on primary sectors to drive the economy: defense, energy, natural resources, fisheries/agriculture, construction, and the digital economy. It is important to look to the future and invest in it. However, success in these areas will be undermined if we do not also focus on, and support, the areas where Nova Scotia has already demonstrated strength. Arts, culture, music, and events are sectors where we not only excel, but which drive the economy and draw new investments, tourists, and residents.

The impact of these cuts will land hardest in Downtown Halifax, which is home to both organizations and events who are now reeling from the shock of these announcements. Large impact organizations, such as the Art Gallery of NS, Neptune Theatre, Halifax Dance, Royal NS International Tattoo, Jazz Festival, and others, are keystones to the vibrancy of Downtown. There are innumerable smaller, but important, organizations who also play a huge role in shaping the urban core experience.

Downtown Vision 2030 has identified 'Entertainment Central' as one of our four transformational moves. It states that ***"Downtown Halifax needs to solidify its reputation as the undisputed capital of Atlantic Canada, specifically in arts, culture, and entertainment. Nova Scotia is home to a wealth of natural talent, and this strength should be driving tourism and fundamentally boosting the quality of life for all Nova Scotians"***. We know, from citizen feedback, and analysis of visitation data, that events are one of the key drivers of downtown visitation and vibrancy.

The cuts, as presented, will have a detrimental impact on the economy, employment, business confidence and success, and the overall ability of our province and city to attract investment. We urge government to reconsider the scope of these cuts.

Sincerely,



Paul MacKinnon, DHBC, CEO