



Canadian Library Association
Association canadienne des bibliothèques

Library Book Rate Member Toolkit

Contact Your Local Member of Parliament Today!

Library Book Rate Member Toolkit

Introduction

This toolkit has been prepared by the Canadian Library Association/Association canadienne des bibliothèques (CLA) as part of its mission to build the Canadian library and information community.

The Library Book Rate is a Canada Post service that has, since 1939, provided a reduced rate for mailing library books between libraries and from libraries to their users. Canada Post has recently announced that the current library book rates will remain unchanged through 2010.

With over 2,000 libraries actively using the Library Book Rate and over one million Canadians benefiting from it annually, the Library Book Rate is an indispensable part of the service delivered by Canada's not-for-profit public, academic, school and special libraries.

The Library Book Rate is not a government program and is not currently financially supported by the federal government. Members of the library community in all constituencies continue to be concerned about its sustainability, given that Canada Post is a Crown corporation with a mandate to generate a dividend for its shareholder, the government. Yet the Rate contributes to the public policy goals of literacy, lifelong learning, inclusion, and vibrant rural and remote communities.

In June 2007, Member of Parliament Merv Tweed (Brandon-Souris, Manitoba) introduced a Private Member's Bill which would allow the federal government to compensate Canada Post for Library Rate costs. The Bill would also extend the list of eligible materials to include CDs, DVDs and other audio-visual materials that are currently ineligible for the reduced rate.

In February 2009, Mr. Tweed continued to demonstrate his ongoing support and reintroduced his Private Member's Bill to protect the Library Book Rate. Bill C-509 (formerly Bill C-322 and C-458) is crucial to protecting library services that benefit all Canadians.

CLA is extremely pleased to see the re-introduction of this Bill.

It is vital that the Government of Canada guarantee support for this Rate beyond 2010. CLA continues to advocate that the Government of Canada allocate permanent funding in order to maintain a reduced rate of postage for library materials and support one million Canadians.

We now need your help to keep this momentum alive!!

Contact Your Local Member of Parliament (MP) Today

A targeted approach is needed at the local level in order to address the library community's concerns with regards to the library book rate. We all must work together to develop strong partnerships with decision makers, and communicate to them how critical this issue is to members of their communities.

Contact your MP today and **make your voice heard!**

Critical Key Messages

1. The 2008 Strategic Review of Canada Post makes a recommendation in relation to the Library Book Rate Program. They stated that in their opinion the provision of the Library Book Rate service was not a part of the current Universal Service Obligations of the Canada Post Corporation. We most strongly disagree with this stance. Currently the Universal Service Obligations statement of the Canada Post Corporation affirms the rights of any resident of Canada to communicate, and send or receive publications by mail regardless of their location within Canada. Canada Post has declared its dedication to providing the services that Canadians need.
2. The Library Book Rate is a very important issue for Canada throughout the provinces and territories. The Library Book Rate:
 - a. Ensures equitable access to documents located in libraries across the country and made available to *all* Canadians;
 - b. Supports the intellectual needs of remote northern and rural communities; and
 - c. It is the principle underpinning the concept that the collections of all libraries are a national asset accessible to all Canadians and as such supports education and lifelong learning as well as helping to maintain Canada's global competitiveness and productivity

3. The numerous testimonies received from librarians who use the Library Book Rate indicate that if the program were discontinued, the following results would ensue:
 - a. It would create a two-tiered library service for “those who can afford to pay” to access information and “those who cannot”. This would jeopardize the access of Canadians to the resources of Canadian libraries necessary to learn, innovate and prosper in the information economy of the 21st century.
 - b. Canadian students, persons with disabilities and residents of rural communities would be particularly disadvantaged as they rely heavily on their local library’s ability to share resources with larger centers.
 - c. It would severely reduce access to books for people living in rural and remote parts of Canada.
 - d. It would reduce the level of service libraries provide, possibly forcing the program onto a cost-recovery basis, with patrons and distance learners having to bear the costs. Such user fees would discourage many patrons from making mail-based borrowing requests.
 - e. Smaller libraries would stop providing lending services and would only borrow materials.
 - f. It would deprive the rest of the country from being able to access the unique information resources often preserved in local libraries.
 - g. It would deny access to library materials to the homebound.

What You Can Do

1. Write a letter to your local MP outlining your key concerns with respect to the Library Book Rate (see sample letter of support below).

If you need help finding your local MP, please consult the website below. When entering your postal code, remember to enter both your office and home postal codes, as the MP may be different, depending on your locations. The more political figures we meet, the stronger our lobby effort will be!

Website to find your MP:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Language=E&Menu=HOC>

2. Follow up with your local MP by requesting a meeting on this issue. If your MP is difficult to meet with, insist that you at least talk to him/her by telephone so that you can express your views directly.

Prior to meeting with your local MP, please review the enclosed Meeting Guide to help you prepare. Once you have concluded the meeting, please fill out the debriefing questionnaire.

3. Support Merv Tweed's Bill by:
 - a. Submitting a press release to your local newspapers or holding a local event, announcing your support for Bill C-509.
 - i. If you need assistance with submitting a press release or planning a local event in your community, please contact Alana Fontaine at (613) 233-8906 or cla@impactcanada.com.
 - b. Sending a letter of support to Merv Tweed for Bill C-509.
 - i. See sample letter of support below.
 - c. Signing Merv Tweed's Petition Form.
 - i. Visit www.mervtweed.com and click on "petitions". Completed petitions can be forwarded to Tweed's Ottawa office to be presented in the House.

Meeting Guide

1. Keep in mind that most government representatives will afford you only 15-30 minutes, so you should be brief and to the point. If there are two or more individuals at the meeting, you should decide on a principal spokesperson to handle the main points. Keep in mind, however, that all individuals should feel free to comment at any time.
2. Open your meeting by thanking the MP for having taken the time from his/her busy schedule to meet with you and discuss this important issue.
3. Introduce yourself by giving your name, title and the organization you represent.
4. Say a few words about the purpose and aim of your meeting:
 - To raise the profile of CLA and the Canadian library community.
 - To promote a better understanding of the importance of the Library Book Rate for communities.
 - To build a long lasting relationship.
5. Note that you will be reporting on your meeting to other CLA members and employees in the MP's riding.
6. Do not hesitate to share personal anecdotes with the MP. They can be very receptive to pieces of information that have a personal touch and in which you have been directly involved.
7. Briefly summarize the key points on the issue you are raising. Make sure to add that if he/she has any questions, to not hesitate to either personally contact you, or Kelly Moore, CLA Executive Director, at (613) 232-9625 Ext. 306.
8. Complete the De-Briefing Questionnaire after the meeting and return it by fax to (613) 230-2669 or cla@impactcanada.com.

Mr. Merv Tweed, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

{insert date}

Dear Mr. Tweed,

As a {insert role}, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your re-introduction of Bill C 322, an Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials). The entire library community remains concerned about the sustainability of the Library Book Rate, which contributes to the public policy goals of literacy, lifelong learning, inclusion, and vibrant communities.

With over 2,000 libraries actively using the Library Book Rate and over one million Canadians benefiting from it annually, it is an indispensable part of the service delivered by the public, academic, school and special libraries that make up the Canadian Library Association.

I am pleased to see that the bill will also expand the traditional book program to include non-print materials such as CDs and DVDs. The addition of audio-visual materials recognizes that people are not all text-based learners and need access to information through a whole host of audio-visual and digital media.

The Library Book Rate supports and encourages the sharing of taxpayer-funded library books in Canada. At relatively little cost, it acts as a bridge between all Canadians, including the disabled, the shut-ins, and residents in remote locations. It is also a way of creating a more literate and knowing population, by helping, for example, students enrolled in distance education programs or Canadians pursuing lifelong learning goals.

The 2008 Strategic Review of Canada Post makes a recommendation in relation to the Library Book Rate Program. They stated that in their opinion the provision of the Library Book Rate service was not a part of the current Universal Service Obligations of the Canada Post Corporation. We most strongly disagree with this stance. Currently the Universal Service Obligations statement of the Canada Post Corporation affirms the rights of any resident of Canada to communicate, and send or receive publications by mail regardless of their location within Canada. Canada Post has declared its dedication to providing the services that Canadians need.

The numerous testimonies received from librarians who use the Library Book Rate indicate that if the program were discontinued, the following results would ensue:

- It would create a two-tiered library service for “those who can afford to pay” to access information and “those who cannot”. This would jeopardize the access of Canadians to the resources of Canadian libraries necessary to learn, innovate and prosper in the information economy of the 21st century.
- Canadian students, persons with disabilities and residents of rural communities would be particularly disadvantaged as they rely heavily on their local library’s ability to share resources with larger centers.
- It would severely reduce access to books for people living in rural and remote parts of Canada.
- It would reduce the level of service libraries provide, possibly forcing the program onto a cost-recovery basis, with patrons and distance learners having to bear the costs. Such user fees would discourage many patrons from making mail-based borrowing requests.
- Smaller libraries would stop providing lending services and would only borrow materials.
- It would deprive the rest of the country from being able to access the unique information resources often preserved in local libraries.
- It would deny access to library materials to the homebound.

It is absolutely vital that the Government of Canada guarantee support for the Library Book Rate. I offer my full support for Bill C-322 and urge all Members of Parliament to do the same.

Once again, thank you for your continued dedication.

Sincerely,

MP NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
ADDRESS

{insert date}

Dear MP NAME,

As a {insert role} in your community, I am writing you today to ask you to please support Bill C-509, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials).

Introduced by Merv Tweed, Member of Parliament for Brandon-Souris, this bill would preserve the existing reduced rate for postage on books between libraries in Canada and would expand the library book rate program to include magazines, records, CDs, CD-ROMS, audio cassettes, video cassettes, DVDs and other audio-visual materials.

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) offers its full support for Bill C-509 (formerly Bill C-458 and Bill C-322).

The bill is slated for second reading in the House of Commons on 28 May 2010.

The Library Book Rate supports and encourages the sharing of taxpayer-funded library books in Canada. At relatively little cost, it acts as a bridge between all Canadians, including the disabled, the shut-ins, and residents in remote locations. It is also a way of creating a more literate and knowing population, by helping, for example, students enrolled in distance education programs or Canadians pursuing lifelong learning goals.

With over 2,000 libraries actively using the Library Book Rate and over one million Canadians benefiting from it annually, it is an indispensable part of the service delivered by the public, academic, school and special libraries that make up the Canadian Library Association.

In my role as a {insert role}, I continue to be concerned about the sustainability of the Library Book Rate, which contributes to the national public policy goals of literacy, lifelong learning, inclusion, and vibrant communities.

The entire library community strongly urges you, as a Member of Parliament, to support this bill and work together to resolve the future of the Library Book Rate Program. The Library Book Rate is in jeopardy as this program is currently scheduled to end without renewal on **December 31st 2010**. Your leadership will be critical in determining the future of this key component of the country's intellectual infrastructure and the net benefits it provides to *all* Canadians.

It is absolutely vital that the Government of Canada guarantee support for the Library Book Rate. Please support Bill C-509 to ensure that permanent and sustainable investment is provided in order to maintain a reduced rate of postage for library materials and support one million Canadians.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

National Library Association Continues to Urge Support for Private Member's Bill

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

OTTAWA (September 30, 2010) The Canadian Library Association (CLA) is pleased with the progress of Bill C-509, *an Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act* to provide for the long-term, sustainable provision of the reduced rate of postage for library materials.

The Bill, introduced by Merv Tweed, Member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris, Manitoba, will protect the Library Book Rate available through Canada Post and is currently at second reading in the House of Commons.

The Honourable Rob Merrifield, Minister of State (Transport) and Merv Tweed joined CLA today on Parliament Hill to deliver remarks on the Bill.

“As the Minister responsible for Canada Post, I am keenly aware of the benefits of the Library Book Rate and its history,” said Minister Merrifield. “I am here today to proudly state that our Government is proud to support literacy and our libraries across the country, both urban and rural, and that our government will strongly support Mr. Tweed’s Bill.”

“Over 2,000 libraries actively use the Library Book Rate and an estimated one million Canadians benefit from it annually,” added Tweed. “It is clear that many Canadians will benefit from an expanded Library Book Rate and I am happy to acknowledge our government’s support of this Bill.”

With increased public visibility and the help of Canadians, this Bill has received widespread support from all Members of Parliament.

“We are thrilled to see support from all sides and we hope to continue this momentum as the Bill moves through the various stages,” commented CLA Executive Director, Kelly Moore. “Members of the library community continue to be concerned about the sustainability of the Library Book Rate, which contributes to the public policy goals of literacy, lifelong learning, inclusion, and vibrant communities.”

The Library Book Rate is a Canada Post service that has, since 1939, provided a reduced rate for mailing library books between libraries and from libraries to their users. Canada Post currently reviews its support on an annual basis.

Bill C-509 would provide that the Government of Canada support a concessionary postal rate for Canada's public libraries, thus guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the program. The legislation would also expand the Library Book Rate program to include non-print materials such as CDs, CD-ROMS, and DVDs.

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The Canadian Library Association/Association canadienne des bibliothèques (CLA) is Canada's largest national and broad-based library association, representing the interests of public, academic, school and special libraries, professional librarians and library workers, and all those concerned about enhancing the quality of life of Canadians through information and literacy.

For more information, please contact Alana Fontaine, CLA Public Affairs: Telephone (613) 233-8906, E-mail cla@impactcanada.com

Bill C-509. Introduction and first reading

Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-509, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is a reincarnate of Bill C-458 and Bill C-322, due to some technical changes we had to make and reintroduce, but I want to assure the thousands of Canadians who have signed the petitions that the bill remains intact.

The amendment does two things. It would preserve a reduced rate for postage on books between libraries in Canada and would expand the library book rate program to include magazines, records, CDs, CD-ROMS, audio cassettes, video cassettes, DVDs and other audio-visual materials.

This is something that Canadian libraries and indeed all Canadians have been asking for since 1967.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)