



December 6, 2007

The Honourable Jim Prentice
Minister of Industry
Suite 105, 1318 Centre St NE
Calgary, Alberta T2E 2R7

Re: Continued funding for research on the nonprofit/voluntary sector

Dear Minister Prentice,

As a leader on policy issues, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) requests your support for continued federal funding for research on nonprofits and charities. In particular, we ask you to support the Satellite Account on nonprofit institutions and volunteering, as well as the Canadian Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP).

CCVO is a registered charity with more than 340 nonprofit member organizations. We provide professional development and connect organizations with information and research. Our members tell us that the Satellite Account and CSGVP provide vital economic data to support necessary fundraising, volunteer engagement and community activities.

Those who invest in nonprofits, including government, are increasingly asking for statistics regarding the sector's size, supporters, type of work, and impact. Without ongoing data, it's extremely difficult to respond to these requests. More importantly, it's difficult to measure impact, recognize emerging trends or plan for the future. Nonprofits do not have the means or capability to collect this data, particularly at a national level.

As the government implements new initiatives, including tax incentives for donations, there must be a way to measure results. The CSGVP and Satellite Account provided by Statistics Canada are among the few documents that enable such evaluation.

The documents are accessed from many sources, some of which may not be counted when the government measures document use. For example, in 2006 the CSGVP report was downloaded 100,000 times from Imagine Canada's website and received 3.4 million hits. We reported the data in a popular *In Brief* document, enclosed, which our member organizations use in their fundraising, media, volunteer management and membership programs. Imagine Canada and Volunteer Canada have used the data to produce 125 resources for nonprofits and charities, and CCVO and our partners have used the research as a foundational reference when creating major strategies.

Nonprofits and charities are a necessary and significant component of Canada's economy and quality of life. We represent 2.5% of Canada's GDP (or 3.5% if volunteer hours are added), yet little information is collected about us, and data such as the CSGVP and Satellite Account have only recently been made available. Given the importance our work to families and communities across Canada, we sincerely hope you will support the need for continued, relevant measurement data.

Thank you for your consideration,

Andrea McManus
Chair of the Board of Directors

cc: Mr. Lee Richardson, MP for Calgary Centre