



COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA FONDATIONS
COMMUNAUTAIRES
DU CANADA

July 9, 2010

The Honourable Tony Clement
Minister Responsible for Statistics Canada
Minister of Industry
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

Dear Minister:

I am writing to express our organization's concern about the potential loss of the compulsory Census long-form. The information collected by this form is playing a critical role in mobilizing citizens and organizations to tackle issues in their local communities – bringing philanthropic, voluntary and corporate resources to the table to address some of our communities' most pressing problems.

I am writing as the head of Community Foundations of Canada, the national association for the more than 170 community foundations that exist in rural and urban communities across the country. Together we are one of the country's largest grantmakers, contributing more than \$140 million to thousands of charities in 2009.

Many of our members, who include some of the largest foundations in the country, participate in a national program called Vital Signs that relies on the data provided by the compulsory long-form Census. Vital Signs tracks quality of life in key areas such as education, the environment, health and housing and is used by local governments, policymakers, community organizations, academic institutions and donors to guide discussion and action.

The impact of the Vital Signs program in communities like Victoria, Vancouver, Kelowna, Calgary, Ottawa, Toronto, Saint John, Montreal, Kitchener Waterloo, to name but a few, has been immediate and impressive. In Victoria, a donor committed \$1 million to local priorities after reading the local Vital Signs report. In Sudbury, Vital Signs pointed to a deficit in the arts. In response, the local community foundation mobilized to create a local Jazz Festival that was championed by businesses and individuals from across Ontario. In Toronto, Vital Signs findings led to the creation of Beyond 3:30, a partnership between the City, the community foundation and multiple corporate and individual sponsors to bridge the gap between the end of school and supper hour. The program provides a wide range of activities and opportunities for youth and is already being recognized as a model for other cities.

These stories are just a few of the outcomes we've seen thanks to the data collected by Statistics Canada on the long-form census. Without that data, our work and the ripple effect it has in communities across the country would not be possible. We ask you to reconsider this plan and continue to make the long-form census compulsory.



If you would like to learn more about Vital Signs you can visit our website at www.vitalsignscanada.ca. We also feature dozens of stories about the impact your data is having on communities and philanthropy across this country in our blog at <http://www.vitalsignscanada.blogspot.com/>. Two of our most recent posts involve coordinated efforts between the City of Medicine Hat and the local community foundation to help flood victims in that area and another deals with The Victoria Foundation's continued focus on homelessness – a direct result of the research it shared via Vital Signs.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Monica Patten".

Monica Patten
President and CEO

cc: Munir Sheikh, Chief Statistician Statistics Canada
CFC Board & Membership