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## **Coming Election Must Focus on Knowledge Economy Issues -- PWAC**

The Professional Writers Association of Canada (PWAC) encourages Canadian voters, media and politicians to ensure information economy issues are front and centre in any coming federal election, and into the next legislative session.

“Canada needs a sharper focus on the new economy of ideas and the rights of knowledge workers,” advises PWAC President Tanya Gulliver. “Over the past decade, successive governments have talked up the knowledge economy, but directed policy and legislation have been woefully lacking. We are in serious danger of being left in the dust of the global marketplace.”

PWAC points to the recently introduced Bill C-61, the proposed amendment to the Copyright Act of Canada, as an example of potentially stalled information-age legislation. As well, the recent \$45 million in arts funding reductions indicate Canada is moving in the wrong direction when it comes to cultural economics.

“PWAC has consulted with government after government on copyright reform and cultural funding,” notes Gulliver. “Just when we get a copyright bill to consider and shape, it looks like it will die on the order paper because of an election. How long will the country wait for another such bill, and how far behind the rest of the world will we fall in the meantime?”

Canada’s cultural sector is vibrant and poised for explosive growth. Cultural industries already contribute upwards of \$46 billion to the Canadian economy, and employ hundreds of thousands of Canadians. Ironically, Canada’s cultural workers remain largely underpaid, and continued funding cuts do nothing but sap the energy of a painfully underfunded sector.

“It’s time for all of Canada’s politicians to get serious about culture as business,” insists Gulliver. “Canada should be leading the way, not joining the knowledge economy third world.”

*Established in 1976, PWAC is the national organization representing 660 professional freelance writers and journalists in Canada.*

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