

National Trust Responds to Federal Budget 2019: Historic Disappointment for Historic Places

March 20, 2019

While Federal Budget 2019 includes positive signals for Indigenous languages and Reconciliation, the National Trust for Canada expresses dismay that it fails to reflect the recommendations in the landmark House of Commons Environment and Sustainable Development Committee report, *Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow*, which included financial measures that would have stimulated private investment and philanthropy for historic places.

Over the past year, heritage groups and thousands of Canadians have called for federal leadership for historic places that would have unlocked economic potential and social capital, and created new green jobs in urban, rural and remote communities. The sector's recommendation for a multimillion-dollar fund in Budget 2019 would have supported the efforts of charities, not-for-profits, and the private sector to save and renew historic places, including places of significance to Indigenous peoples. Not only is the Budget 2019 missing these long-awaited federal measures for historic places, it is also silent on providing adequate funding for Parks Canada's National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places, which provides much-needed bricks-and-mortar funding for places that are touchstones for our nation's history.

The National Trust applauds the investment of \$33.8 million over three years to develop and maintain the National Residential School Student Death Register and support commemoration efforts at school cemeteries, \$15.2 million over three years for Canada Roots Exchange (promoting understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth), as well as \$333.7 million over five years to support Indigenous language revitalization projects. The budget provides modest funding of \$24 million over two years to the *Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage Program* and the *Celebration and Commemoration Program*, including \$10 million for a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

While the announcement of \$1.01 Billion in 2018-19 to increase energy efficiency in residential and commercial buildings is laudable, it will be essential to ensure these measures do not have unintended negative impacts on historic places; these measures will need to be calibrated to account for the substantial contributions historic places currently have on carbon reduction through, for example, resilient materials and historic design strategies. New tourism funds may also touch historic places in some way: \$58.5 million over two years for a Canadian Experiences Fund tourism related infrastructure (e.g. rural and remote communities, Indigenous tourism); \$5 million for tourism marketing to help Canadians discover lesser-known areas and hidden national gems.

"The absence of federal measures for historic places in Budget 2019 is a missed opportunity to support the fight against climate change and create skilled green jobs," said Natalie Bull, Executive Director of the National Trust. "In the run up to a federal election, no party's platform will be complete without a robust strategy to encourage investment and promote adaptive use of existing and historic places."

To review the entire 2019 budget, please click [here](#).