

## Resolution: Supporting a Healthy Ecosystem for Local Journalism

**WHEREAS** a healthy, professional news media is essential for the proper functioning of civil society and democracy at the local, regional, federal and international levels;

**WHEREAS** the Public Policy Forum declares – on its [website](#) for the 2017 report *The Shattered Mirror: News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age* (commissioned by the federal government) – that “real news is in crisis” in this country;

**WHEREAS** the media help by providing a critical communications path for the public, including during emergencies; other public risks to health; education; the environment; economic opportunities; civic and political knowledge of policy initiatives; and the conduct of public officials, and candidates for office;

**WHEREAS** Canadians have lost the essential services provided by more than 2,500 media workers in 100 communities across Canada due to [layoffs](#) since the time the COVID-19 pandemic began, and advertising revenues plunged prompting an [emergency](#) \$30-million advertising-buy by the federal government;

**WHEREAS** residents of 190 Canadian communities [lost 250 established news outlets](#) due to closings or mergers between 2008 and 2018;

**WHEREAS** two thirds of Canadians agree or somewhat agree that because of the Coronavirus/Covid-19 outbreak the federal government should treat widespread media bankruptcies and lay-offs as an emergency, according to a [Nanos Research poll](#) of April 2020;

**WHEREAS** the federal government allocated nearly \$600 million in [aid for Canadian media](#) over five years in its 2019 budget, including a 25-per-cent tax credit for newsroom salaries; a 15-per-cent tax credit for digital media subscribers; and charitable tax status for non-profit news outlets;

**WHEREAS** Canada’s federal government acknowledged in its [2019 budget](#) (p. 173) that “A strong and independent news media is crucial to a well-functioning democracy”;

**WHEREAS** at least 15 municipal councils in Ontario and B.C. – representing more than 1.5 million residents – have [already passed](#) resolutions similar to the one proposed below; and

**WHEREAS** the news media in the Prince George area have been instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring local citizens have accurate local information;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Prince George Council recognizes that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in our city; urges all local governments in BC and across Canada to recognize that a robust news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in their jurisdictions; endorses legislation and regulations to support and rejuvenate news outlets across Canada; and urges the federal government to move quickly to pass legislation to ensure an ecosystem for a healthy news media to serve all Canadians.