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Region of Peel Archives and the Dissolution of Peel Region

June 19, 2023

As President and Chapter Chairs of the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO), we are writing to you with concerns about the status of the Region of Peel Archives in the face of the dissolution of the Regional Municipality of Peel as announced by the Government of Ontario in May 2023. The AAO is a professional organization representing over 350 archival institutions and archivists in Ontario.

The Region of Peel Archives is the official archival repository of the Region of Peel and its constituent municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. The Archives collects government records to support the municipalities' obligation to preserve and provide access to government records as per the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection Privacy Act. In addition to government records, the Archives collects significant non-government records, including those of organizations, groups and private citizens that document the history and development of the area and its people. For example, the Archives contains the records of the Old County of Peel and the numerous smaller communities within it, from the early 19th century onwards.

The records serve as the collective memory of the area, providing accountability and transparency, and fostering an understanding of the Region's place within Ontario. A diverse group of people use the archival services from municipal staff who access the records to inform decisions on planning, policies, legal, and other areas, to students, historians, genealogists, journalists, property owners, and other private citizens. In 2022, the Region of Peel Archives received and responded to over 1500 requests to access the rich and diverse records in its care, in addition to the tens of thousands of online visitors to the records archives staff provide access to and maintain online.

The AAO recognizes the importance of programs that support culture, history and heritage in Ontario. The Government of Ontario defines culture as the "lifeblood of a vibrant society, expressed in the many ways we tell our stories, celebrate, remember the past, entertain ourselves, and imagine the future." The AAO is aware that a five-member board was appointed to provide recommendation for a dissolution process that



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"respects taxpayers and protects existing services." Therefore, the AAO asks that this board consider the crucial role that the Region of Peel Archives plays in not only safeguarding the Region's municipal records, but also in preserving the historical and cultural memory that inform and contextualize the present.

Financially, the dissolution of the archives would effectively disappear tax payers' investment to date into the archives: its staff, its infrastructure, its place within the community. It would retract and disappear the community stories that Region of Peel Archives cares for and makes accessible - including the Richard L. Frost postcard collection and Dr. Beaumont Dixie fonds.

In closing, the AAO urges you to safeguard the treasure that is the Region of Peel Archives, and preserve the vital history, community, and identity of the people that make up the area.

Respectfully,
The Archives Association of Ontario

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President, AAO

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