



## Newfoundland & Labrador Public Libraries

Administration Division

Over the past several days many different media outlets have contacted Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries (NLPL) seeking a comment on Bill C-15 and its impact on the Library Book Rate (LBR), public libraries, and NLPL in particular.

The LBR affords libraries across the country a significant discount on postage costs when they are sending library materials through the mail. Many library systems, public and academic, across the country use the LBR when sharing inter-library loans with other library systems. Here at NLPL, we use the LBR to send system-wide holds to branches throughout the province.

Historically, Canada Post had to seek approval from the Federal Government in order to make any changes to the LBR. The proposed changes in Bill C-15 remove this oversight and would allow Canada Post to make changes to the LBR without needing to seek approval from the Federal Government. Here at NLPL, where we rely very heavily on the reduced postage to support our system-wide holds, we are worried about what this lack of oversight could mean for the future of the LBR. Our concern is that the proposed changes could leave the door open for Canada Post to change the LBR in a way that could negatively impact how we carry out our business.

Last year alone, NL Public Libraries shared 213,997 items to residents across the province, nearly one quarter of all library circulations for that year.

Additionally, many of our locations are in northern and rural areas, including Labrador, and our system-wide holds program, powered by the LBR, allows us to ensure patrons throughout the province have reliable access to the provincial system's entire collection. Communities in the province who do not have a local library rely on our Books-by-Mail service for access to library materials. Without the Library Book Rate, access to library materials throughout the province will be severely limited.

NLPL is also deeply concerned about the potential elimination of the Free Literature for the Blind program, which would have a dramatic impact on people who rely on the program and the organizations who support them. As a member of the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), we feel it is vitally important that persons with print disabilities not be impeded in accessing literature. Digital options are not suitable for many people, such as those who cannot afford digital readers, do not have access to reliable internet, or require physical braille material.

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) has prepared a website (<https://save-interlibrary-loans.lovable.app/>) explaining the potential negative impacts of Bill C-15 on libraries across the country.