REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

APRIL 23, 2026

SUBJECT: Endorsement of CULC Position on Alberta Bill 28

PURPOSE: For Endorsement

PREPARED BY Michael Ciccone - CEO

PRESENTED BY: Michael Ciccone - CEO

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Library Board endorse the position of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) in opposing changes proposed to Alberta's Library Act in Alberta Bill 28, the Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Bill 28), and, that the Library Board reaffirm its commitment to intellectual freedom, customer privacy, equitable access to information, and the principle of local governance of public libraries, consistent with Ontario's Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, e.P44;

BACKGROUND:

On April 14, 2026, CULC, of which London Public Library is a member, issued an open letter to Alberta's Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Hon. Dan Williams, raising concerns about proposed changes to the Alberta Library Act in Bill 28. The changes would grant the Minister new powers currently held by locally appointed boards and professional library staff. The letter is included in the Board package.

The Government's focus of the legislation is on library collections and protecting children from materials deemed "sexually explicit".

Libraries, including London Public Library, maintain rigorous collections policies and catalogue and shelve materials based on age and audience. Libraries also uphold parents' rights to make decisions for their families regarding borrowing and adhere to all related legislation, including the Canadian Criminal Code, which would prohibit us from loaning material in violation of the law.

While the Government's focus is on collections, the authority that Bill 28 would grant the Minister is much broader. Below is the language currently proposed:

> *(2) The Minister may appoint a person as an inspector to conduct an inspection for the following purposes:*

(a) to inspect any matter relating to the management, administration or operation of a public library;

(b) to determine if a board is complying with this Act and the regulations.

(3) An inspector may, in the course of an inspection,

(a) inspect the public library property that may be accessed, used or borrowed by members of the public at a library service point,

(b) inspect the provision of public library services at a library service point,

(c) examine and make copies of the records of a board that are relevant to the purpose of the inspection, and

(d) require an employee of a board to

(i) give a written or oral reply to a question that is relevant to the purpose of the inspection, or

(ii) provide any other information requested by the inspector that is relevant to the purpose of the inspection.

(6) After completing an inspection, the inspector shall make a report to the Minister and provide a copy of the report to the board.

(7) On receiving the inspector's report, the Minister may make any order that the Minister considers appropriate.

London Public Library's approach to serving the community is grounded in a strong commitment to intellectual freedom, customer privacy, and equitable access to information. These principles are embedded in our service culture, reflected in our strategic plan, and codified in our policies.

For example, our Collections Management Policy affirms that "The Library Board is aware that in providing materials that represent a wide range of ideas and viewpoints, some materials in the Library's collections may be considered objectionable by some people. The Library recognizes the right of any individual or group to reject library material for personal use but does not accord to any individual or group the right to restrict the freedom of others to make use of that same material."

An endorsement by the Library Board of CULC's position on Alberta Bill 28 would reinforce our commitment to this and other policy positions, align with our stated purpose and values, and demonstrate solidarity with library partners in Alberta and across Canada.

NEXT STEPS:

Assuming Board approval, the motion would be shared with our CULC colleagues, the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries, the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations.