Dear Applicant:

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Our File #: EDU/041/2016)

On July 6, 2016, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development received your request for access to the following records/information:

"May we have all departmental correspondence; and all minutes, notes, documents or other record of matters related to the decision to defer the closing of 54 public libraries while a study is conducted?"

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the Deputy Minister for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) to provide access to the requested information. In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copy is attached.

Please be advised that this letter will be published following a 72 hour period after it is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the letter posted to the Office of Public Engagement's website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned by telephone at 709-729-1841 or by e-mail at brianevans@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Brian Evans, CIPP/C
Director of Information Management & Special Projects
ATIPP Coordinator

Attachment
Dear Mr. Taylor:

As a result of the Government Renewal Initiative process and Budget 2016 decisions, Government proposed a Regional Library Model which would see approximately 86% of residents being within a 30 minute drive to the nearest library. Current library services would be enhanced through measures such as establishing a minimum standard of 30 operating hours per week and increased funding for e-books and books by mail. The implementation of the new model would result in 41 regional libraries throughout the province and a reduction of 54 libraries over a two-year period. Government committed to reinvest $652,500 in the new model while realizing overall annualized savings of $1.06M.

On April 26, 2016, the Provincial Information and Libraries Board (PILRB) passed a motion to accept the recommendation of a Regional Library Model. Shortly after this decision, Government, through consultation with PILRB, communicated that all libraries scheduled to close in 2016 would remain open until October 31, 2016 to allow sufficient time to notify community stakeholders and make necessary arrangements for transition.

Since this announcement, there have been questions regarding the process used to determine the Regional Library Model. This model recommended by government, and approved by PILRB creates a regionalized service that primarily identified locations based on their ability to service the highest number of people in the closest proximity to a library. The locations were further evaluated within the Regional Library Model based upon: physical location/regional proximity to another location; ability of library to support regional service delivery model; and library usage statistics.

In order to provide further analysis of the proposed Regional Library Model, I am proposing that we conduct an organizational and service review of provincial libraries and therefore request that PILRB suspend the decision of April 26, 2016, pending the outcome of this review.

I would further propose that the review be guided by a Steering Committee comprised of equal representation from Government and PILRB officials. Government will provide the services of an external consultant (EY) to conduct the review including provincial consultations. The planning phase of the process could begin this summer, with the first step being jointly determining the Terms of Reference of the review. The remaining work and consultations would occur during the fall with a report anticipated in late fall.
To allow a timely start for the review, I ask that you consult with your Board, and provide a response as soon as possible. Please contact me if you require further information.

Sincerely,

DALE KIRBY, MHA
District of Mount Scio
Minister

cc: Andrew Hunt, Executive Director- PILRB