To whom it may concern,

I urge you to make the proper revisions to the bill regarding the allocation of funds from the lottery, so that arts in the NWT may be better supported to survive in the North.

The face of the north is arts and culture. That is what makes us unique and who we are, and yet the individuals and groups in this industry feel undervalued. Artists and Cultural practitioners are asked to share services, expertise and demonstrations with little or no compensation, while all competing for the same small pots of money, and receiving fractions of what is requested.

This territory is full of traditional knowledge keepers, who need the right people, resources, and support to save that information from dying. These resources, are a form of reconciliation.

Art and creativity has as much of a role in wellness and opportunity as physical activity and academics. Money and resources are needed to support and instill this in our children and youth, so they have the same chance as anyone else in any other province or territory to pursue their dreams and enhance their community.

You use artists to design your websites, your buildings, your new branding. You use artists’ footage and images to promote our territory abroad, their craftsmanship and artistry to share with other cultures. Whose creativity is behind promoting our city and territory for tourism? These people are all artists, and are all vital in very different ways.

Arts organizations needs more funding and resources to fuel their incredible ideas that make this city and this territory an amazing and unforgettable place to visit and live. They need support to bring people here to share their skills, and send our people elsewhere to enhance their skills. They need funding to create workshops and programming that inspire youth and emerging artists to keep learning, preserving and pursuing their dreams. Individual artists need funding to make being a working artist viable, in a territory with such high cost of living.

Being an artist or a facilitator of the arts is incredibly challenging, and not for the faint of heart. It takes hard work, countless thankless and unpaid hours of fine tuning a skill or an idea, and it is all run on passion, encouragement and local support. This community is a place like no other, where someone with the right idea, the right support, and guts to keep at a dream can make something out of nothing.

But what about getting past surviving, in this cold and isolated land; how can we create an environment where artists can thrive?

Please support the youth who dream of being artists, and the artists who dream of making a living and a life, sharing their talents, and strengthening their communities.

Julaine Debgorski