

# **More Canada**

## *Increasing Canadians' Awareness and Reading of Canadian Books*

17 June 2020

For immediate release

### **Canadian publishers, books at risk as Indigo Books struggles with Covid impact**

Independent Canadian book publishers are worried that Indigo Books' financial struggles with the effects of Covid-19 could prove a cultural disaster for Canadian writers, readers and publishers.

In a think tank paper released today, publishers call for Ottawa to act speedily on any request for help from Indigo under its emergency LEEFF program for large companies.

They ask that support for Indigo go with cultural conditions as well as the standard terms of the program.

Specifically, the publishers ask that Indigo commit to devoting 20% of its book shelf and display space to Canadian-authored books.

Independent publishers report that they are at risk because of Indigo's dominant role in retail bookselling in English Canada. With its portfolio of Indigo, Chapters and Coles stores, the chain is the single largest customer for many publishers.

With book sales plummeting because of temporary store closures, inventory being returned, and payments delayed, publishers are already stressed. An Indigo bankruptcy or receivership would have a cascading effect on their industry, the publishers say. Independent publishers account for three-quarters of all Canadian-authored books published annually.

The paper is the work of the More Canada think tank project, which produced a major study in December 2018 pointing to a steady 10-year decline in the share of sales and reading represented by Canadian authors in English Canada. This paper was prepared based on input from a dozen of some of the publishers of Canada's largest independent publishing houses.

The report's authors are Philip Cercone, executive director of McGill-Queens University Press, James Lorimer, president of Formac Publishing of Halifax and James Lorimer & Co of Toronto, and Jeff Miller, publisher of Irwin Law, Toronto. The report is available online at [www.morecanada.ca](http://www.morecanada.ca).

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