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May 7, 2021

Mayor Bill de Blasio

City Hall

New York, NY 10007

Committee on Libraries Chair Jimmy van Bramer

250 Broadway, Suite 1833

New York, NY 10007

Re: Budgeting for New York City Libraries

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Committee on Libraries Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, and the rest of the New York City Council:

I write on behalf of the Authors Guild to encourage you to provide enhanced funding for New York City's libraries in this year's budget. Since the Guild's headquarters are based in Manhattan, we recognize the concerns of New Yorkers as our own. Our city's public libraries are a source of great support and education for its citizens, as well as comfort in times of stress such as we have all experienced over the past year. Like other public gathering places, they have had to close their doors and have suffered greatly as a result of COVID-19. While the libraries have continued to provide (and even increase) their digital services during 2020 and early 2021, they are nonetheless in dire need of assistance to enable them to re-open and play a part in New York City's re-emergence from the pandemic.

The Authors Guild is the nation's oldest and largest professional organization of writers. Since our founding in 1912, we have served as the collective voice of American authors and have long supported the rich and diverse literary culture of our country. Our almost 10,000 members include novelists in all genres and categories, nonfiction writers, journalists, historians, and poets. The Guild works to promote the rights and professional interests of authors in various areas, and advocates on issues such as copyright, freedom of expression, and taxation.

The Authors Guild recognizes that supporting libraries not only helps authors, it helps our culture as a whole by enabling libraries to act as an archive of current and classic literary works and provide them to readers without charge. It cannot be forgotten that libraries not only purchase these works—which benefits authors—they invite authors to their premises to conduct discussions and book signings, which hopefully will be starting again soon. To restore themselves to full functionality, New York's libraries must have adequate funds to maintain fully stocked shelves and hire staff in numbers to serve the millions that come through their doors. That is why we encourage you to give New York City's libraries due consideration in your budget calculations.

The Authors Guild and its members thank you for addressing the needs of our members and all New Yorkers in supporting their libraries, and for giving our views your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cheryl L. Davis", is displayed within a light gray rectangular box.

Cheryl L. Davis
General Counsel