

March 18, 2019

To: Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Re: Centenary elm on Parliament Hill in imminent danger of removal

Dear committee chair, vice-chairs and members,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the four groups that communicated with you on March 5. We outlined the urgent concerns we share around the fate of an historic elm tree on Parliament Hill.

We have not received a reply from you to our original letter, in which we requested that you take immediate action. We described how a 100-year old elm is in danger of being destroyed, along with many other mature trees, unless you, in the exercise of your oversight of the Parliamentary Precinct Rehabilitation Project, intervene. We have now learned from the Minister of Public Services and Procurement that the tree removal will proceed at the end of March. So the matter is urgent.

As your committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss the Centre Block rehabilitation project, it is crucial that the matter of the centenary elm tree be part of your discussions.

I am, therefore, requesting that you put this item on the agenda of the March 19 meeting and that you provide time for me and representatives of three other environmental groups to address the committee.

It is important for members of the committee to understand our perspective on the health of the elm tree, which is a controversial topic, and one that the Minister has cited as part of the rationale for removing the tree. But as the attached document shows, the evidence for PSPC's position that the tree is not healthy is contradictory and inconclusive. We believe a further assessment if its condition is warranted in the spring before this historic tree is removed forever.

Paul Johanis
Chair, Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital