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**SPECIALTY, PAY, CABLE & SATELLITE SERVICES
OWE IT TO CANADIANS TO SUPPORT CANADIAN DRAMA
CRTC hearings must keep strong Canadian programming rules in place**

TORONTO – At its upcoming hearings, the CRTC must maintain spending requirements for Canadian pay and specialty services, the Coalition of Canadian Audio-Visual Unions (CCAUA) asserts. The CCAUA firmly contends that a strong Canadian cable and satellite industry should directly contribute to creating a strong television production industry for Canada.

Beginning April 8, 2008, the CRTC is holding public hearings on the regulatory framework for cable and satellite services in addition to specialty and pay channels. The CCAUA maintains that strong rules must remain in place in order to achieve the cultural objectives of the *Broadcasting Act*.

The CCAUA is calling for the CRTC to:

- Maintain current Canadian programming spending requirements on pay and specialty TV services.
- Maintain the current regulatory framework that supports a strong Canadian pay and specialty sector to enable these services to meet the spending requirements.
- Remove the ability of specialty and pay television licensees to use Canadian Television Fund licence fee top-up monies to reach their Canadian programming expenditure targets.
- Increase cable industry contributions to Canadian programming to 6% of their revenues from the current 5%.
- If fee-for-carriage is approved, direct any new revenue to the production of the hardest genre of programming to produce: Canadian drama. In addition to this, broadcasters should be required to spend 7% of ad revenue on Canadian drama.

“The regulatory regime has served discretionary services as well as cable and satellite companies (BDUs) very well. These industries enjoy profit margins in excess of 20%. If the CRTC cedes to the requests of BDUs, the clear loser in the system will be Canadian programming. Market forces are not enough to ensure that scripted, Canadian drama gets on our television screens,” says Brian Anthony, National Executive Director and CEO, Directors Guild of Canada.

Stephen Waddell, National Executive Director, ACTRA, says, “Licensees will not spend on drama unless they are regulated to do so. We know this from the fallout of the CRTC’s disastrous 1999 Television Policy that caused Canadian English drama to virtually disappear from primetime conventional TV.”

“Canada’s robust, multi-billion-dollar cable industry can afford to increase the amount it puts into Canadian programming – they made more than \$7 billion in 2007,” says David Hardy, Business Agent, NABET 700. “*The Broadcasting Act* requires cable companies as well as every other component of the Canadian broadcasting system to contribute to the creation of Canadian programming,” adds Hardy.

“This is a case of corporate greed wearing the mask of consumer advocacy, and pretending that deregulation will mean more choice,” says Maureen Parker, Executive Director, Writers Guild of Canada. “The truth is that Canadians already have access to almost all of the top U.S. programming – and they get it through Canadian broadcasters that also support Canadian programming. The regulatory framework protects the Canadian consumer, and it ensures that there are the necessary funds in the system to meet the goals of the *Broadcasting Act*. That framework should not be disassembled in the interests of higher corporate profits.”

Participating in this CCAU submission and the public hearings in April relating to this matter are ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) and the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, Local 700 CEP (NABET).

CRTC hearings begin Tuesday, April 8, 2008. The CCAU appears before the CRTC on Friday, April 18, 2008.

Other members of the CCAU are: the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) the American Federation of Musicians – Canada (AFM Canada), Union des artistes (UdA), Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ), Association Québécoise des techniciens de l'image et du son (AQTIS), and Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC).

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