



**Writers Guild of Canada argues Canadian Television Fund essential for truly Canadian broadcasting system**

**For immediate release**

**Ottawa, February 4, 2008** – Representatives of the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) appeared before the CRTC today to voice their support for the Canadian Television Fund (CTF). The CTF has been under attack by certain cable providers, leading to a CRTC-commissioned Task Force to review the Fund.

“This hearing, and the striking of the Task Force that prompted it, were completely unnecessary,” says Rebecca Schechter, President, Writers Guild of Canada. “The CTF has a highly qualified board of directors who are capable stewards, constantly reviewing and revising the Fund’s objectives and guidelines. Even the Auditor General reviewed the CTF just two years ago, and she found it functioning well.”

The WGC voiced its opposition to a number of the Task Force recommendations, chiefly the proposal to divide the fund into a ‘cultural’ and a ‘commercial’ stream, with the commercial stream having lesser ( 8 point as opposed to 10 point) Canadian content requirements.

Maureen Parker, Executive Director, Writers Guild of Canada, says, “aside from introducing an administrative nightmare into the system, this proposal has no foundation as a business model. Canadian writers and the Canadian television industry are always striving for commercial success. And guess what? The most popular Canadian shows – *Corner Gas*, *The Rick Mercer Report* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* – are all 10 point Canadian shows. What we really need are more opportunities to make quality scripted Canadian television.”

“The television industry in Canada has been put on the defensive in order to appease a few powerful cable operators,” says Charles Lazer, Vice President, WGC. “We are wasting valuable time and resources here that could have been and should have been directed at making quality programming.”

Parker added that, “when it comes to the funding structure of the CTF, any talk of ‘private-sector money’ is a red herring. The money the cable companies direct to the fund is not theirs – it is not a donation made out of the goodness of their hearts – it is a requirement of their licence. And the protections from competition they receive in return make it a pretty sweet deal.”

Referring to a Harris/Decima poll released earlier in the day, Lazer added, “Canadians have told us in authoritative numbers that they value having the choice to watch Canadian programming, and they believe the cable and satellite providers should contribute to support the creation of that programming.”

For more information, please contact David Kinahan, Director of Communications, Writers Guild of Canada, at 416-979-7907 or 1-800-567-9974, or by email at [d.kinahan@wgc.ca](mailto:d.kinahan@wgc.ca)