



**CanWest/Goldman Proposal a Bad Deal for Canadians:**

Canadian Broadcasting being sold out to foreign interests in backroom deal

**For immediate release**

**Toronto, August 10, 2007** – The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) voiced to the CRTC today its profound opposition to the proposed takeover of Alliance Atlantis Communications (AAC) by CanWest Global Communications and a US bank.

The CRTC states that it “must be satisfied that the broadcasting undertakings are under Canadian control at all times.” WGC’s position is that this deal talks like a Canadian broadcaster but walks like an American banker. CanWest Global Communications is hiding foreign ownership behind the smoke and mirrors of voting shares and equity interests.

Maureen Parker, Executive Director of the Writers Guild of Canada, says “13 of our most visible, most successful specialty channels will become branches of an American bank – we can see it on paper and, if the deal is allowed to go through, we will see it on our airwaves. Beholden to their majority American investor, CanWest will deliver low cost programming in order to meet their Canadian programming requirements. If the CRTC approves the application, CanWest’s synergies will mean less choice for Canadian viewers, and Canadian programming will be reduced to repeats, realities and cheap serials.”

The American bank exerts further pressure on CanWest’s programming by placing the future ownership of the AAC broadcasting assets in the balance. CanWest recently amended its application to include earnings targets of \$200 million+ by 2011. If the targets are not met, CanWest’s equity percentage decreases, and the US bank could force the sell off of our broadcasting assets to the highest bidder. That these outcomes, contravening the Canadian Broadcasting Act, are even acknowledged as possibilities is cause for the rejection of the application.

Parker added, “this deal sees a foreign investor putting up the bulk of the cash. For that majority of risk, they’ll reap the majority of the reward. The proposal is a slap in the face to Canadian taxpayers who helped fund the growth of AAC, and who will now watch 64 per cent of the profit leave the country to line the pockets of American investors.”

The WGC also expressed to the CRTC its frustration with the process of CanWest’s application to the CRTC. It has become a backroom deal, shrouded in secrecy and CanWest’s responses to deficiencies continue to change the shape of the deal long after the notice of public hearing. This has made the process of informed and considered intervention difficult and expensive, particularly for organizations with fewer resources than a major broadcaster.

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)

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents more than 1,800 professional screenwriters across Canada who create the distinctly Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens, radios and computers – such as dramatic TV series and movies, feature films, documentaries, animation programs, comedy and variety series, children’s and educational programming, radio drama, corporate videos and digital media productions.

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