



Broadcasters get another break while Canadians lose out again

For immediate release

May 17, 2007 – Canadians lose out while broadcasters get another break with our broadcast regulator's new policy for Canadian conventional television.

"This is a huge disappointment. The CRTC has delayed any discussion of Canadian programming expenditure requirements for at least another year until broadcaster licence renewals, yet in the meantime they have allowed broadcasters to air more commercials," said Maureen Parker, Executive Director of the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC).

"Without an expenditure requirement, broadcasters are filling their Canadian content requirements with cheaper, lower quality programs, such as reality and entertainment news shows. How does this benefit the consumer? They are being deprived of the choice to watch high quality Canadian programs, and now on top of that they are being subjected to more commercials."

Private broadcasters benefit by being allowed to simulcast American programming and earn revenues from the Canadian commercials. In return they are obligated to provide something different than the U.S. broadcasters – such as Canadian drama. Since 1999, when the CRTC Television Policy eliminated expenditure requirements for broadcasters, the WGC has been supplying hard evidence to illustrate Canadian broadcasters decreasing commitment to producing and airing original Canadian drama.

That's why the WGC has asked the CRTC to put regulations in place to require broadcasters to spend a minimum of 7% of revenues on original English-language drama.

"We have worked hard to make the screenwriters' voice heard about the importance of reinstating expenditure requirements so that we have a healthy broadcasting system. There needs to be a balance between the financial benefits to the broadcaster, and policies that support Canadian creators and programming. That's why this new policy is so frustrating – it tilts the balance far in favour of the broadcasters," said Rebecca Schechter, WGC President.

"The CRTC needs to show some leadership. Don't leave the decision to air Canadian drama up to the broadcasters. We know from experience that they may ramp up their spending in the next few months in anticipation of licence renewals, but as soon as those licences are locked in don't expect to see more high quality shows like *Corner Gas*," says Parker.

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents more than 1800 professional screenwriters



Writers Guild of Canada

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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