



Writers Guild of Canada Urges Rethink in Wake of CBC Job Cuts

For immediate Release

Toronto – March 25, 2009 – The Writers Guild of Canada is extremely disheartened by the CBC’s announcement today that it will cut 800 jobs in order to balance its budget. The WGC asks: why has it come to this? We have known for more than a decade, through successive governments and through a variety of official reports, that the CBC is underfunded – the economic downturn and the resulting decline in advertising revenues have only exacerbated what was already a tenuous financial situation.

The Lincoln report, “Our Cultural Sovereignty,” tabled in 2004, was a two-year study of broadcasting by the standing committee on Canadian Heritage. Among its recommendations was increased and stable funding for the CBC. And just last year, the call for an enhanced parliamentary appropriation was repeated in another standing committee on Canadian Heritage report which the WGC publicly supported.

The WGC has appeared in front of successive Heritage committees, advocating for financial stability for the CBC. We presented clear ideas, with the BBC as a model, about how to get the CBC where it needs to be. These reports and recommendations have gone nowhere.

“The loss of 800 jobs is drastic” says Maureen Parker, Executive Director, WGC. “If the CBC needed an advance on their next budgetary allocation, why was this dismissed outright? There has certainly been sympathy expressed for the financial position of the private broadcasters, whose main business is the simulcast of U.S. shows. Yet the CBC is ours – it is where Canadian talent, Canadian voices, take prime-time prominence and pride of place. The CBC should come first.”

The CBC is making popular Canadian shows, and has been succeeding in the battle for ratings. The WGC believes it is essential that the CBC be fully and sufficiently funded to fulfill its role as our national voice. We urge the government to demonstrate its understanding of the value of our public broadcaster, and advance the necessary portion of the CBC’s parliamentary appropriation.

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

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents 2,000 English-language professional screenwriters across Canada. These are the talented people who create the distinctly Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens, radios and computers.