



CBC Must Be Held to Higher Standard, say WGC

For Immediate Release – Gatineau – November 26, 2012 – The message from the Writers Guild of Canada today was that, as our nation’s public broadcaster, the CBC must be held to a higher standard than the private broadcasters when it comes to commissioning and airing quality Canadian programming. The WGC appeared today at the CRTC hearing into the CBC’s licence renewal which began November 19.

WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker noted that “the public broadcaster arrived at the CRTC asking for flexibility. Flexibility cannot come at the expense of their legislated mandate. We ask the CRTC to require at a minimum that the CBC maintain their current level of Canadian drama and documentaries. Canadians deserve no less from their public broadcaster.”

The WGC recommended a combination of exhibition and expenditure requirements on Programs of National Interest (PNI) to ensure that CBC offers audiences quality original programming and a variety of choice. Specifically, the WGC recommended a requirement of 10 hours per week of PNI rather than the 7 hours CBC has proposed. CBC should not have the flexibility to air less PNI than it does now.

The WGC also requested that minority co-productions like *The Tudors* be excluded from PNI because they do not reflect Canada to Canadians as required by the *Broadcasting Act*. Canadians want quality Canadian drama. They prove it by making shows like CBC’s *Republic of Doyle*, *Arctic Air*, *The Rick Mercer Report* and *Heartland* strong ratings successes.

The WGC also argued that CBC should be held to a higher standard when it comes to programming for kids and youth, a viewership that CBC claims (unsubstantiated) has abandoned TV for digital platforms. CBC’s continuously diminishing offering to these audiences may make their claim a self-fulfilling prophecy. To avoid this and underline CBC’s mandate to serve *all* Canadians, the WGC recommended that CRTC establish a requirement for original programming for children and youth on CBC TV.

Reinforcing the WGC’s call for a strong public broadcaster was award-winning screenwriter Andrew Wreggitt, the writer behind uniquely Canadian stories like *The Wrath of Grapes: The Don Cherry Story* and *The Phantoms*. “While we empathize with the CBC as it struggles with its financial situation,” says Wreggitt, “it is essential that the CBC’s core mandate be preserved. We have great Canadian stories to tell and the CBC is the place to tell them.”

For more information, please contact David Kinahan, Writers Guild of Canada, at d.kinahan@wgc.ca

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents more than 2,000 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. These are the creators who write the Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens and digital platforms.