



Screenwriters Call on CRTC to Take a Canadian First Approach to TV

For immediate release

Gatineau – November 23, 2009. The Writers Guild of Canada appeared today at the CRTC hearing into TV policy. Rebecca Schechter (*Little Mosque*), Andrew Wreggitt (*Mayerthorpe*) and Cal Coons (*Murdoch Mysteries*) made the trip to Gatineau to let the CRTC know that value-for-signal is not the only issue. This hearing is about the future of Canadian production.

Rebecca Schechter, President, WGC, says, “almost eleven years have gone by since we’ve had a meaningful reexamination of TV policy in Canada. Instead, we’ve had delays, digressions and extensions – the creative community can’t wait any longer. The TV industry has been held hostage, and Canadian audiences are losing out. The *Broadcasting Act* is clear – broadcasters and cable companies exist to provide a variety of Canadian programming. Shareholder profit should come second to this obligation. Without a clear and diverse choice of quality Canadian programming, what’s the point of having our own broadcasting system?”

To ensure that high-quality Canadian programming will be produced in the volume necessary to provide audiences with real Canadian choice, the WGC proposes a four-point plan. First, an overall Canadian programming expenditure (CPE) for conventional services, and the continuation of existing CPE for specialty services. Second, a corporate group CPE specifically for drama. Third, a drama exhibition requirement for conventional services. And finally, specific support for Canadian documentaries and children’s programming.

“Enough already with the posturing of broadcasters and cable companies,” says Maureen Parker, Executive Director, WGC. “Their fight is diverting attention from other important issues, such as the appropriate support for Canadian programming. We’re proposing a new TV policy that reflects the business reality of a consolidated industry. Our model, with its group-based drama expenditure and exhibition requirement, gives broadcasters more flexibility and Canadians audiences more quality Canadian programming. Audience ratings for shows like *Flashpoint* and *Heartland* prove that when our shows are properly funded, scheduled and promoted, they connect with Canadian viewers.”

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 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. These are the talented people who create the distinctly Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens, radios and computers.