



Requirements for CBC Fair, say WGC

For Immediate Release – Toronto – May 28, 2013 – Today, the CRTC issued its first post-review licence renewal decision for CBC in more than 13 years. The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) called the decision fair and reasonable given the financial constraints under which the national public broadcaster operates.

The WGC notes that the key improvement in the renewed licence is a shift from “expectations” of the broadcaster to formal conditions of licence. Expectations were not enforceable by CRTC whereas a Condition of Licence is a requirement the broadcaster *must* meet.

It is now a condition of licence for CBC TV that at least 75% of the broadcast day and at least 80% of prime time be devoted to Canadian programming, including nine hours per week of Programs of National Interest (PNI), such as quality Canadian drama and documentaries. The WGC will be closely monitoring programming to ensure the CBC meets with these requirements.

WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker says that “establishing a floor for Programs of National Interest is a crucial step – these are the shows our members write, and these are the shows Canadians want to watch. Shows like *Republic of Doyle*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Arctic Air*, *The Rick Mercer Report*, *Heartland* and more are the lifeblood of the public broadcaster.”

The WGC also supports the CRTC’s recognition of the importance of a strong presence for children’s programming on the public broadcaster. CBC’s mandate is to serve *all* Canadians, and this audience was being left behind at the very moment they are developing viewing habits. A requirement as a condition of licence to broadcast 15 hours per week in each language will help reinvigorate CBC’s commitment to the next generation of viewers.

Because of interventions from organizations like the WGC, CBC had to commit to two more hours of PNI than it had originally proposed. The CRTC has noted however that the conditions of licence merely set out minimums, and that it encourages the public broadcaster to do more. Parker added “the WGC echoes that call and looks to CBC for more than the bare minimum.”

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 2,100 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.