

WGC appears before CRTC to champion the Canadian showrunner and preserve Canadian creative control

For immediate release

Toronto, ON | May 21, 2025 — Today, the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC), representing over 2,500 professional English-language screenwriters, appeared before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) as part of the ongoing hearings related to Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2024-288: *The Path Forward – Defining “Canadian program.”*

The WGC’s key message to the Commission was clear: **Canadian programs must be defined by Canadian creative control — starting with the showrunner.**

“We thank the CRTC for recognizing the vital role of the showrunner and the importance of writers in the creation and production of a scripted series,” said WGC Executive Director Victoria Shen. “How we define Canadian content is one of the ways we win or lose the battle on cultural sovereignty. Now more than ever, Canada needs strong cultural policies that invest in Canadian writers and creatives who live, work, and create in Canada.”

The WGC welcomed the Commission’s proposal to formally recognize the showrunner as a key creative position, and strongly supports the requirement that the role be held by a Canadian wherever one exists.

“This recognition is a game-changer for Canadian screenwriters,” said WGC President Bruce Smith. “It places writing — where every series begins — at the centre of the creative process, fulfilling the promise of the *Online Streaming Act*. Without this foundation, we risk losing the Canadian voice at the heart of Canadian storytelling.”

The WGC proposed a clear definition of “showrunner” as: **a writer-producer who is the chief custodian of the creative vision of a series and whose primary responsibility is to communicate the creative vision of that series through control of both the writing process and the production process.**

The WGC also addressed other aspects of the consultation, and included the following recommendations:

- Rejection of the Commission’s proposed “80% rule” for screenwriters, which could undermine Canadian creative control;
- Continued protection for Programs of National Interest (PNI), including drama and documentaries, which are essential to Canadian storytelling;
- Adoption of a Canadian residency requirement for the positions of showrunner and screenwriter; and

- Exclusion of AI-generated material from any definition of Canadian content.

The WGC will be closely following the remainder of the Commission's public hearings on this matter because the outcome will be pivotal to the survival of the Canadian audio-visual sector.

A recording of the WGC's full presentation before the CRTC is available on CPAC:

<https://www.cpac.ca/crtc-hearings/episode/may-21-2025--writers-guild-of-canada?id=a027903d-1b0e-403b-b6d7-79a1fc9c8313>

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ABOUT THE WGC

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents more than 2,500 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. Our members create stories that entertain and inspire audiences on every screen.