



January 14, 2008

Hon. James Prentice, P.C.,
Minister of Industry
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Prentice,

The Canadian Conference of the Arts is Canada's oldest and largest umbrella organization for the arts and culture sector. Over the course of six decades the CCA has participated in most public policy discussions at the federal level. It is for this reason that we enclose a copy of the CCA submission to the Competitiveness Panel.

In the process of assessing how best to improve competitiveness, the Panel has raised questions about the current restrictions on foreign ownership in the cultural industries and broadcasting/audio visual distribution enterprises. These policies are vital to the continue health of Canadian artists, creators, producers and broadcasters/audio-visual distributors. They must operate in a relatively small domestic market while also expanding into global markets.

The CCA respectfully draws to your attention the fact that while the members of the Panel are highly experienced and distinguished Canadians, there is no one with a background in cultural policy issues. The foreign ownership restrictions in the cultural industries and broadcasting/audiovisual sectors act to guarantee a space for Canadian cultural expression. Canadians have access to an ever-growing menu of cultural materials from around the world; the CCA considers it essential that they also have access to their own experiences and expressions.

We would ask you to either appoint another member to the Panel with sufficient knowledge and expertise in cultural policy, or to create a sub-panel to examine the issues related to foreign ownership restrictions with the rigor and respect these important safeguards merit. The CCA fully supports the ability of Canadians to enjoy cultural products and services from the international community. However, we are equally insistent that a space for the Canadian voice constitutes an abiding responsibility for the government to advance the public good.

On behalf of the Board of Governors and membership of the CCA, I look forward to working with you or your officials in addressing these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alain Pineau'.

Alain Pineau
National Director

Cc
Members of the Competition Policy Review Panel