

Press Release

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The Canadian Conference of the Arts asks the CRTC to increase the funding available for Canadian programs

“Canada’s highly successful cable companies and specialty broadcasters should be required by the CRTC to spend more money to ensure Canadians have access to additional high quality Canadian programs and movies,” says Alain Pineau, National Director of the Canadian Conference on the Arts.

Pineau was speaking on the opening day of the three-week long hearing looking at how broadcasting distribution undertakings and discretionary programming services are regulated by the CRTC. Mr. Pineau continued, “CCA supports distributors paying a reasonable fee to carry over-the-air television stations, but only if the proceeds are used to create more and better quality Canadian shows, and are underpinned by enforceable licence conditions.”

In its submission, the CCA denounces the process used by the Commission over the past several months. The CCA expresses surprise that the CRTC introduced a reverse onus in this proceeding, asking those who support existing regulations to prove why they are necessary, rather than requiring those who favour change to provide evidence to show how deregulation would help to achieve the objectives of the *Broadcasting Act*. “We assume that the Dunbar-Leblanc Report, released by the Commission in September 2007, was to provide such evidence, but it did not,” continued Mr. Pineau. “Instead, it documented lots of opinions in favour of deregulation but had no evidence to support them.”

Mr. Pineau also objected to the constantly shifting parameters used by the Commission in this process. “Parties were given little time to respond to a shifting series of fundamental questions about how our broadcasting system functions. The process was detrimental to the public debate the CRTC is mandated to organize. As the custodian of the most important expression of cultural objectives in Canada, we expect the CRTC to play its role fairly for all participants, including public interest groups such as the CCA,” concluded Mr. Pineau.

The Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) is the national forum for the arts and cultural community in Canada. It provides research, analysis and consultations on public policies affecting the arts and the Canadian cultural institutions and industries. The CCA fosters informed public debate on policy issues and seeks to advance the cultural rights of Canadians.

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