



April 26, 2005

Hon. Liza Frulla
Minister of Canadian Heritage and
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the 23,000 members of ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), I would like to thank you for the Government's second response to the report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage entitled *Our Cultural Sovereignty* (the 'Lincoln Report').

I am writing to urge you to act on one of the most critical recommendations in the Lincoln Report, specifically 5.13 – that through an Order in Council, the Government should direct the CRTC to review and amend its 1999 Television Policy.

As you know, ACTRA together with our colleagues in the CCAU (Coalition of Canadian Audio-visual Unions) have been giving voice to the thousands of Canadian creators and performers who cannot make a living in this country because of the disastrous situation created by the CRTC's 1999 Television Policy.

Drama consistently commands the most viewers of any genre of TV programming. We know the power of drama because Canada's private broadcasters spend more money buying U.S. drama programming than any other genre. In fact, Canada's English-language private broadcasters spend four times more on American programming than they do on English-language drama. Without regulations that require expenditure and exhibition of Canadian English-language drama, Canada's private broadcasters will continue to fill their prime time schedules with U.S. programming and flaunt the spirit and intent of Canada's *Broadcasting Act*.

The Government's response to the Lincoln Report contains a number of references to the importance of regulation as a key to maintaining the provision of and access to Canadian content. The response also iterates that the role of the CRTC is to make and enforce regulations to achieve the objectives of the *Broadcasting Act*.

I am very pleased that the first pillar of the Government's response focuses on Canadian

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content. Equally, I am encouraged that it is the Government's intention to put more emphasis on high quality Canadian content that reaches wide audiences.

It is under the second pillar of the Government's response that we hope that the Government will act to direct the CRTC through an Order in Council to repair the damage done by the devastating 1999 Television Policy by reviewing the Policy and reinstating drama content and expenditure requirements on Canada's private broadcasters. This would be in keeping with the process the Government outlines in its response to Lincoln requiring the CRTC to systematically review its regulatory policies and regulations to ensure that they are achieving their stated goals and objectives.

The time to review the 1999 Television Policy is now. Daily, Canada's best and brightest performers and creators are being forced to leave the country because there is no meaningful work for them here. And those that stay behind are unable to find roles and projects that allow them to earn a living in their profession.

You and your Cabinet colleagues have the power to make the positive changes necessary to save English-language drama programming. On behalf of ACTRA's members, I urge you and the Cabinet to order the CRTC to review the 1999 Television Policy. Once that review is ordered, ACTRA and its colleagues representing the creators and performers of Canada will demand that the CRTC scrap its ill-fated 1999 Television Policy and reinstate drama content and expenditure requirements on Canada's private broadcasters.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Waddell', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephen Waddell
National Executive Director