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February 5, 2009

Via e-mail

Mr. Robert A. Morin
Secretary General
Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2

Dear Mr. Morin:

Re: CRTC Review of Scope of Licence Renewal Hearings for Private
Conventional Television

I am writing to you on behalf of DOC's 800+ members.

We are very concerned with the Commission's announcement that it will be reviewing the scope of the upcoming license renewals with an eye towards determining "how the focus can be significantly narrowed".

While we appreciate that the economic downturn has led to short term fiscal hardships for Canadian Broadcasters, we do not feel that this is an adequate reason for reducing the scope of the hearings. All Canadians and Canadian businesses are hurting, including the businesses of our members.

The upcoming license renewal hearings must be open, transparent and comprehensive. This is the only way to ensure that the terms and conditions for the next license period are fair for all stakeholders.


DOC is concerned that narrowing the scope of the license renewals will open the door for Broadcaster demands to lower their Canadian content requirements. Entertaining any such thoughts would spell disaster for the independent production community.

We would also like to remind the commission that we have been working closely with the CFTPA in negotiating terms of trade agreements with the main Canadian broadcasters. The commission's support of these negotiations has been vital in generating progress. We urge the commission to continue its support of the terms of trade negotiations and request that it continues to demand a strict timeframe for their completion. We hope that the commission will not allow Broadcasters to use the economic downturn as an excuse to avoid their obligations towards the Canadian production industry and the creation of Canadian content.

By curtailing the scope of the hearings, we fear that many vital issues needing the Commission's attention will go unattended. One issue of particular concern to DOC and its members is the definition of priority programming and the documentary genre. The recent joint study commissioned by DOC, CFTPA, WGC, DGC and ACTRA clearly articulated points in this regard.

We join our voice to that of our colleagues and urge the Commission to reconsider its position on limiting the scope of the hearings. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a horizontal line followed by a stylized, cursive signature that appears to read 'John Christou'.

John Christou
Co-chair