



DOCUMENTARY
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February 23rd, 2009

Via e-mail

Hon. James Moore, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Minister,

As you will know from our letter of January 6th, 2009, the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC) is a National Arts Service Organization representing over 850 independent documentary filmmakers across Canada. It is a bilingual member-driven organization dedicated to promoting, supporting and developing documentary filmmaking in this country.

The purpose of this letter is to address the immediate and broad ramifications of the manner in which the termination of the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund (CIFVF), slated for March 31st of this year, is to be carried out. We respectfully submit that it is essential to the termination process that the reality of film production and the government's contractual obligation to these productions be central to the process.

Many of the one hundred and fifteen productions in the current CIFVF funding stream are produced and/or directed by our members. As you are no doubt aware, creating any genre of film almost without exception implies taking a long-term view of both the financing and the actual fabrication of the film. While some of the affected productions are in the development stage, others are in midst of production or post-production. Producers have been asked to have their final deliverables submitted by March 31 when, in some cases, they might simply be starting production given that they received funding at the last deadline. The March 31st deadline does not take into consideration the fundamental realities of film production intrinsic to each of the affected productions where financing can take time to get into place, where production might be dependent on events and seasons and so forth.

We understand the Department needs to wrap up the CIFVF program yet, we are confident that the Minister can find the administrative support to allow the affected productions to report on their projects beyond the March 31 deadline. Furthermore we hope that the Department will lend its support and resources to an orderly and realistic closing down of the operations of the administration of the CIFVF which also has its own set of business-related legally binding and contractual obligations associated with the 1000 productions it has financed over the years.

Over the past eighteen years of the existence of the CIFVF, our membership would be the typical candidate submitting an application for funding from the recently terminated fund. We applaud the effectiveness of the CIFVF funding, not only for the indispensable role it has played in financing both the work of novice and veteran filmmaker alike, but also as a prime example of a successful educational fund. The fund has been the exclusive support for "educational" films - those meant to be used in classrooms, on subjects that are intrinsically non-commercial, yet dealing with important subjects and topics of particular interest to high school, college, and university students and teachers. In the past fiscal year alone the CIFVF received 212 applications of which they were able to assist in the financing of 59 productions.

It is unavoidable that the demise of this funding stream will have far-reaching ramifications in Canadian documentary production, affecting not only the significant role it has played in educational, non-commercial films but also the competitive creative edge that it has allowed its subscribers. Here it is worth noting that according to research carried out for our publication *Getting Real* 3, documentary production in 2007 accounted for \$ 440 million dollars in direct economic activity and employed 15,000 people.

The closing down of the CIFVF does not alter the reality that in the Canadian production landscape there exists a strong need for a program that supports productions that aren't driven by broadcasting concerns and that with the demise of the CIFVF, the need will remain for support to those productions that aim to reach an audience that is not delivered via television screens. We would like to take this opportunity to state that DOC is committed to working with the Department of Canadian Heritage to developing such a program that is a necessity in this sector. We welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Minister and the department how best to fill the void left by the CIFVF's disappearance in order to support independent filmmaking in Canada as well as a comprehensive closing down of the program.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Christou', written below a horizontal line.

John Christou, Co-Chair
DOC National Executive Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Hahn', written below a horizontal line.

Tina Hahn, Co-Chair
DOC National Executive Committee