



August 5, 2022

Ms. Janice Charette  
Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet  
1000 - 85 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A3

BY EMAIL: [info@pco-bcp.gc.ca](mailto:info@pco-bcp.gc.ca)

Dear Ms. Charette,

Re: **Petition to the Governor in Council concerning Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-165, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – Various audio and audiovisual services – Licence renewals<sup>1</sup>**

## Petition of the Canadian Media Guild (“CMG”)

### Preliminary Notes:

*1. The Canadian Media Guild (CMG) has worked vigorously, alongside other Canadians, to fight systematic racism and all forms of discrimination at CBC/Radio-Canada and ensure fairness, equal opportunity, creativity and improved programming at the national public broadcaster. Our members have fought courageously, often at great personal and professional risk, for meaningful change and true inclusion and diversity at CBC/Radio-Canada. We have defended these values in our dealings and negotiations with the Corporation, through research, publications, outreach initiatives, and with decision makers including the CRTC.*

*It’s been a long, often discouraging fight, with little meaningful change.*

*It’s in that context that the **new conditions** issued in Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-165 - Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – Various audio and audiovisual services – Licence renewals, **requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to reflect in its programming and its workforce the full diversity of Canadians including equity-seeking communities, specifically Indigenous Peoples, racialized Canadians, Canadians with disabilities and Canadians who self-identify as LGBTQ2, along with women who self-identify as belonging to these communities<sup>2</sup> are necessary, long overdue and an important step forward.***

*The new requirements are directed at a problem that is a priority for Canadians, media workers and the country as a whole. In addition, they are a positive response to the Truth and*

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<sup>1</sup> [Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-165 and Broadcasting Orders CRTC 2022-166 and 2022-167 | CRTC](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2022/2022-165.pdf>

*Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 84.*<sup>3</sup> Therefore, we respectfully request that the Governor in Council, should it choose to grant our request below, emphasize in its orders the importance of maintaining those specific new conditions.

**2. CMG supports advertising on CBC/Radio-Canada** as it has helped keep the national public broadcaster afloat over decades of underfunding and continuous cuts, and because there is no evidence that removing ads would be beneficial either to CBC/Radio-Canada's public mandate, or to the system as a whole.<sup>4</sup> It is also important to note that public broadcasters in most industrialized countries carry advertising. Our **concern is with branded content ("Tandem")** which blurs the lines between real, independent journalism and "fake news".<sup>5</sup>

**3. CMG supports the renewal of CBC Licences for a 5-year period.**

### **Petition:**

The Canadian Media Guild ("CMG") hereby submits a petition to refer back an important decision by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (the "CRTC").

CMG petitions the Governor in Council to help protect and safeguard CBC/Radio-Canada's local news services in all communities, large and small, as well as the public broadcaster's role as a trusted source of quality news, by ensuring the following:

a) that the CRTC require CBC/Radio-Canada, through mandatory conditions of licence, to offer local television news/programming to Canadians no matter where they live, including re-establishing and maintaining a minimum of 14 hours a week of quality local television news/programming for those living and working in the multicultural, multiracial metropolitan centres of Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal.

b) that the CRTC require CBC/Radio-Canada to drop branded content ("Tandem") from its news services platforms. This practice of paid advertisements masquerading as news does not belong on the public broadcaster's news services as it creates confusion for the public and undermines the high standard and quality the public expects and relies on from their national public broadcaster as a trusted news source.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls\\_to\\_action\\_english2.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cmg.ca/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CMG-Submission-CRTC-2019-379-February20\\_2020.pdf](https://www.cmg.ca/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CMG-Submission-CRTC-2019-379-February20_2020.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cmg.ca/en/2020/10/30/cmg-letter-to-heritage-minister-regarding-cbc-tandem/>

CMG therefore respectfully requests that the Governor in Council issue an Order pursuant to Section 28 of the *Broadcasting Act*, **referring the decision back to the CRTC for reconsideration and hearing**, citing the information outlined in this document and emphasizing:

a) the importance for Canada’s public broadcaster to be required, through conditions of licence, to provide local news and programming (81% of survey participants say it’s the most important news to them) on television, the most accessed platform (“*traditional television viewing still far exceeds viewing of Internet-based television.*”)<sup>6</sup> in communities across the country – **including Canadians living and working in the multicultural, multiracial communities of metropolitan centres**. This way, viewers can access, and workers can produce, trusted local television news and programming from and on **their** national public broadcaster. BD CRTC 2022-165, as issued, **goes against the policy objectives in subsection 3(1) of the *Broadcasting Act***, in particular, the objectives regarding programming that draws from local and regional sources, and programming that reflects Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions.<sup>7</sup> The decision is also inconsistent with the policy objectives related to: enhancing national identity; strengthening the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of the country; serving the needs and interests of Canadians and reflecting their circumstances and aspirations; supporting and enhancing Canadian talent and employment opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

b) the importance for CBC/Radio-Canada to drop branded content from its news services platforms to preserve a high standard<sup>9</sup> and ensure there is no confusion between advertising and news when Canadians turn to the public broadcaster as a trusted source of quality news.

ALL OF WHICH is respectfully submitted this 5<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2022.

*[original signed]*

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President, Canadian Media Guild  
1-800-465-4149

*[original signed]*

Carmel Smyth, National President  
Canadian Media Guild  
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c.c.: The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage  
(by email: [info@pch.gc.ca](mailto:info@pch.gc.ca))  
Claude Doucet, Secretary General, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications  
Commission (CRTC) (by email: [claudedoucet@crtc.gc.ca](mailto:claudedoucet@crtc.gc.ca))

Enclosures

CMG Petition (this document below the letter)

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<sup>6</sup> Communications Monitoring Report - <https://crtc.gc.ca/pubs/cm2019-en.pdf>

Traditional television and Internet-based television (Page 166)

<sup>7</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html> - subsections 3(1)(l) and 3(1)(m)

<sup>8</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html> - subsections 3(1)(b) and 3(1)(d)

<sup>9</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html> - 3(1)(g)



**Canadian Media Guild**  
**La Guilde canadienne des médias**  
CWA Canada Local 30213 / Section locale 30213, SCA Canada



***Petition to the Governor in Council  
pursuant to Section 28 of the Broadcasting Act  
Re: Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-165, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – Various  
audio and audiovisual services – Licence renewals***

**Petition of the Canadian Media Guild (CMG)  
August 5, 2022**

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## The Nature of the Petition

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1. The Canadian Media Guild (“**CMG**”) files this Petition to the Governor in Council to **refer back for reconsideration and hearing**, the decision of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (the “**CRTC**” or the “**Commission**”) in Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-165, *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – Various audio and audiovisual services – Licence renewals* (June 22, 2022) (hereafter “**BD CRTC 2022-165**” or “**CBC/Radio-Canada Licence Renewal Decision**”).
2. CMG specifically requests that the Governor in Council issue an Order pursuant to Section 28 of the *Broadcasting Act*, referring the decision back to the CRTC for reconsideration and hearing, emphasizing, for consideration, the information outlined in this document as follows:
  - a) the need for the CRTC to re-establish and maintain weekly hour requirements for local television news/programming in metropolitan centres at a minimum of 14 hours per week, through conditions of licence, in order to preserve this critical service for all Canadians, including those living and working in Canada’s multicultural, multiracial metropolitan centres of Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal – so that they can access the news service they rely on from their national public broadcaster like other Canadians. This would make real and give full meaning to the new long overdue and necessary conditions requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to reflect the full diversity of Canada in its workforce and its programming;
  - b) the importance of creating strong employment opportunities in Canada’s audiovisual sector, specifically at the country’s national public broadcaster, a leader in this industry, to ensure that current and future generations of Canadians of all backgrounds can continue to create and produce content in and about their communities;
  - c) our pressing concern that over the years the Corporation has proven itself an unreliable steward when it comes to supporting its local news/programming services, and therefore BD CRTC 2022-165 giving CBC/Radio-Canada *carte blanche* to further do as it pleases with this critical service to the public is misguided;
  - d) our firm belief that in this time of widespread misinformation and disinformation, CBC/Radio-Canada must double down on its role as a leader in Canada’s media landscape, and therefore must be required to drop branded content from its news services platforms, a practice that is detrimental to maintaining the high standard the national public broadcaster must uphold in its role as a trusted source of accurate news.

3. CMG is of the view that the recent decision in BD CRTC 2022-165 removing the mandatory conditions requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to provide a minimum of 14 hours per week of local television news/programming in metropolitan centres **goes against the policy objectives in subsection 3(1) of the *Broadcasting Act***, in particular the objectives regarding programming that draws from local and regional sources; that reflects Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions; and that reflects the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, in BD CRTC 2022-165, the Commission barely having introduced the long awaited, much needed new conditions requiring the national public broadcaster to reflect and be inclusive of the full diversity of the country in its workforce and its programming,<sup>11</sup> it then proceeds to undermine those same measures by removing conditions requiring the public broadcaster to produce and provide local television news/programming in Canada’s multicultural, multiracial metropolitan centres where a great number of Canadians live and work, including those who are “Indigenous Peoples, OLMCs, racialized Canadians, Canadians with disabilities, Canadians who self-identify as LGBTQ2, and women who self-identify as belonging to these communities.”<sup>12</sup>

Significantly, the CBC Licence Renewal Decision undermines employment at the national public broadcaster, and therefore in the audio-visual sector in Canada, for current and future generations of Canadians by weakening local news/programming on a key media platform in Canada’s major centres.

4. This Petition concerns two specific areas of the CRTC Decision in the renewal of CBC/Radio-Canada licences (BD CRTC 2022-165):
- a) the stark reversal of decades of support for mandated hours of news production, thus – allowing the public broadcaster to cut back on television news programming especially in metropolitan centres with predictable negative impacts on the public broadcaster’s overall services to Canadians and to jobs in the audiovisual sector; – and undermining the potential positive change that would result from the much awaited conditions, issued in the same decision, requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to reflect the full diversity of Canada in its workforce and in its programming;

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<sup>10</sup> <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/PDF/B-9.01.pdf> - 3(1)(i)(ii) 3(1)(m)(ii) 3(m)(viii)

<sup>11</sup> Programming for and by a diversity of Canadians <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2022/2022-165.pdf> (parag. 83-104)

<sup>12</sup> Programming for and by a diversity of Canadians <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2022/2022-165.pdf> (parag. 83-104)

- b) the lack of stronger measures to address branded content (“Tandem”) and its impact on the high standard and quality expected of CBC/Radio-Canada as the national public broadcaster and a trusted source of quality news.
5. The Commission renewed the CBC/Radio-Canada licences from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2027 with a majority of three, and two dissenting opinions.<sup>13</sup>

## The Petitioner

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6. The Canadian Media Guild, *Local 30213 of CWA-Canada*, is a democratic trade union that represents over 5,000 members across Canada, including employees at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Société Radio-Canada, The Canadian Press and Pagemasters North America, Thomson Reuters, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), TVO, TFO, VICE, ZoomerMedia, AFP, CKOF, BuzzFeed, Islington Printing, Canada’s National Observer, and Freelance media workers.
7. Our members hold a wide variety of jobs. They are the announcers, hosts and reporters you see, hear and read on the radio, TV and online; Guild members also determine and create the content of the programs themselves. They are administrative support staff, information technology professionals, camera operators, photographers, and customer service representatives. Much of what you see in your daily newspapers, on television, radio or new media sites comes to you thanks to the hard work of CMG members.
8. The CMG is one local of CWA/SCA Canada, which is in turn affiliated with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which has a membership of over six hundred thousand workers across North America.
9. We believe that Canadians will have access to higher-quality information and entertainment if the people creating it have stable and fair employment conditions.
10. CMG participated actively in all public stages of the CRTC’s consideration of the CBC/Radio-Canada Licence renewal, including filing a submission and appearing at the hearing.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-165 and Broadcasting Orders CRTC 2022-166 and 2022-167 | CRTC](#)

<sup>14</sup> [CMG advocates for quality news, diversity at CBC license renewal hearing | CMG](#)

## **Decision goes against key Policy Objectives of the *Broadcasting Act***

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### **CBC/Radio-Canada’s local television news/programming is -now more than ever- a vital service for meeting the information needs of Canadians in communities large and small, including those living and working in Canada’s multicultural, multiracial metropolitan centres – Broadcasting Decision 2022-165 significantly undermines that service**

11. In a stark reversal of decades of support for mandated hours of news production, the CRTC in Broadcasting Decision 2022-165 issued June 22, 2022, removed conditions that require CBC/Radio-Canada to provide local television news/programming to serve close to the large part of the Canadian population who live and work in metropolitan centres across the country. As a result of that decision, there are no longer any minimum requirements for the public broadcaster to provide local news/programming to Canadian television viewers living in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal. This decision not only leaves a significant part of the public without a service that is appreciated by Canadians – indeed a majority places local news at number one as the most important news to them, ahead of Canadian national news and international news<sup>15</sup> – it also undermines the role of the public broadcaster as a public asset that is designed: to help enhance and strengthen all communities across the country; to serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations of all Canadians; to be a source of quality news and information Canadians can rely on<sup>16</sup>. These key objectives of the *Broadcasting Act* are significantly diminished as a result of the CRTC’s decision to remove conditions requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to provide a minimum number of hours of local television news/programming in metropolitan centres.

12. In our view, this approach could lead to the cancellation of CBC/Radio-Canada’s local newscasts/programming in major centres, denying large groups of the population the option of a public media service in their communities. There are potentially numerous negative consequences as a result, including: lack of local news and information from the public broadcaster for many Canadians who deserve this service like all their fellow citizens; diminishing the diversity of voices (public element) for local television in our largest cities which raises the obvious question of who will come to fill that gap; and decreasing employment opportunities at the public broadcaster and thus in the audio-visual sector in Canada for current and future generations of Canadians who live and work in the country’s major centres.

Crucially, the decision to remove requirements for local news/programming on CBC/Radio-Canada television in a large part of the country comes at a time when we are being inundated with disinformation and misinformation (fake news) on all platforms, with, as an example,

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<sup>15</sup> Importance of Various Types of Programming <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/publications/reports/rp140424.htm#t6>

<sup>16</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html> - 3(1)(b), 3(1)(d), 3(1)(g), 3(1)(l), 3(1)(m)



major public health consequences during a pandemic, when it proved critically important to mobilize trusted sources of news to counter the spread of harmful information about Covid-19. Trusted television local news/programming from the national broadcaster has been instrumental in helping provide accurate and vital information in communities large and small. It is therefore difficult to understand the removal of conditions to ensure this option is universally available.

We are also witnessing, at home and around the world, relentless attacks on democratic values and on hard-earned rights that society relies on. What a time, then, for the CRTC to decide that rather than put in place strong supports for a major source of quality news and information, that serves the special needs of different communities and helps strengthen the social fabric of Canada<sup>17</sup>, it will instead set up CBC/Radio-Canada to vacate that space and abandon those responsibilities. This, despite the fact that we know from the many studies conducted as a result of the global decline in local news over the past decade, that there is a strong connection between the availability of local news and citizen engagement.<sup>18</sup>

13. Of the five CRTC commissioners involved in BDC CRTC 2022-165, three supported the decision while two dissented. In her **dissenting opinion, CRTC Commissioner Monique Lafontaine (Ontario)** points out how strange the majority decision to remove minimum hour requirements for local television news/programming in Canada’s major cities is, noting that not only had CBC/Radio-Canada “confirmed in its written submissions and at the oral phase of the public hearing that it believed that minimum obligations for local/news programming on its licensed conventional television stations was appropriate for Canadians in CBC/Radio-Canada’s forward looking proposal”, but in addition “the public record of this proceeding supports minimum obligations for the Corporation to broadcast local programming across Canada, not just in smaller markets. Indeed, several interveners including ACTRA, the CAB, the CMG, CMAC, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, the FRPC and PIAC highlighted the importance of local programming licence obligations for CBC/Radio-Canada. This was also affirmed in the majority decision at paragraph 446 as follows: Most interveners from the industry and consumer groups opposed a reduction in the amount of local programming provided by the CBC [and Radio-Canada] on its licensed conventional audiovisual stations, while some interveners proposed increases in related requirements. [emphasis added]”

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<sup>17</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html> - 3(1)(d) and 3(1)(m)

<sup>18</sup> Civic Engagement Strongly Tied to Local News Habits  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2016/11/03/civic-engagement-strongly-tied-to-local-news-habits/>

Commissioner Lafontaine concludes that: “the removal of the minimum licensing obligations for local/news programming in metropolitan markets across Canada is inappropriate at this time given the crisis that has arisen in the provision of news and information.”<sup>19</sup>

We could not agree more.

## **Reflecting all Canadians...meaningfully**

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**Even as CRTC finally introduces – with one hand – long overdue conditions requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to meaningfully reflect the diversity of Canadians in its workforce and in its programming, the Commission immediately takes away – with the other hand – conditions for this programming to be produced and accessed on a major media platform**

14. A disappointing outcome of the decision to remove requirements for local television news/programming is that while BD CRTC 2022-165 did contain a serious response to the dedicated and extensive push by CMG and numerous other Canadians to put in place conditions requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to tangibly address the lack of diversity in programming and staffing at all levels, the Commission then turned around, in the same decision, and pulled the rug out from under the feet of those under-represented, under-served, equity-seeking Canadians who have long fought for this change. In effect, just as it was about to be held to serious account for the first time on the *Broadcasting Act*'s objectives of meaningfully reflecting all Canadians in their full diversity, in its workforce and its programming, CBC/Radio-Canada is simultaneously allowed to drop its obligations to provide local television news/programming in Canada's largest cities – where large parts of the population, including members of those equity-seeking groups, live and work. In other words, one of the most accessed news/programming platform will no longer be required (available) for them to work in or to see themselves reflected in.

15. CMG and other organizations as well as numerous Canadians have worked for years, including interventions at the CRTC, to demand CBC/Radio-Canada reflect the full diversity of Canadians.

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<sup>19</sup> Dissent CRTC Commissioner Monique Lafontaine (Ontario) –

iv) The Canadian Programming Exhibition Framework Approved in the Majority Decision Sets Out No Minimum Weekly Local Programming Obligations in the French- and English language Metropolitan Markets Across Canada - Pages 260-263

<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2022/2022-165.pdf>

The conditions CRTC has issued<sup>20</sup> requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to include and reflect Canadians' diversity in its workforce and in its programming are necessary and long overdue. CMG joins its voice with those welcoming this change, and requests that should the Governor in Council refer back BD CRTC 2022-165 to the CRTC for consideration and hearing, it includes unequivocal clarifications about the importance of maintaining these new obligations.

16. Regarding employment overall, we are concerned that by allowing the absence of the public broadcaster on televisions in the largest communities across the country, the CRTC may incite a lack of interest in the public broadcaster and its services from the public and from current and future media workers—an outcome that should be concerning to the Commission as well.
17. For jobs, employment and the functioning of news services overall at CBC/Radio-Canada, the decision raises further real and tangible problems. A few years ago, **a senior CBC/Radio-Canada executive** (Jennifer McGuire, at the time, General Manager and Editor in Chief, CBC News and Local Services) testified at a hearing before the CRTC as follows: "(...) In the case of CBC News, our national reporters are managed locally in addition to our local reporters, and we are able to actually create more content and have the content be positioned locally as well as nationally. So Chris Brown you see on national television, he also files locally in Vancouver.

Some of our more significant national investigative stories start as local stories that got supported by the national network to drive more, deeper investigations. So the sexual harassment story in the RCMP, the Boy Scouts story that you might remember rolled out as both a set of local stories across the country and also a national story. So it is about people going back and forth, but it is also about digging deeper on stories that we find locally, seeing if they have applications to other markets and elevating that to a national story.

So for us, for CBC, it is crucial. We think that the local is not only the foundation of our talent, and generating us stories, but also reflecting local stories to a national audience and also bringing the impact of national stories down through a local prism to a local audience. We have gotten more effective at coordinating it, I think, as we've integrated our newsrooms, and the digital piece is sort of the next -- the next piece of this. So it's national and local television, but it's also radio, TV, and online."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Reflection of diversity through the CBC's workforce – Paragr 680  
Programming for and by a diversity of Canadians – Paragr 83-95  
<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2022/2022-165.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Local Services <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/transcripts/2016/tb0129.htm> - (7245-7247)

Based on the information above, it is clear that the CRTC’s decision to allow CBC/Radio-Canada to cut local news/programming on television is likely to create major disruptions, potentially a weakening of the news services overall, especially over the five-year period or more of the licence. In the estimation of many, a network is only as strong as its stations or bureaus.

Some concrete consequences that may result are: negative impact on quality news programming overall at CBC/Radio-Canada; undermining the ability of the public broadcaster to provide news services that reflect the country to its regions and regions to the whole country - an important objective of the *Broadcasting Act*<sup>22</sup>; negative impact on relevance and potential loss of a significant number of jobs.

This may also result in permanent damage to the news media environment given the key role CBC/Radio-Canada plays in the media ecosystem as one of the three main elements of the broadcasting system – the public service media alongside private and community media. At a time when every effort should be deployed to invest in quality local and regional news and information, the rush by the regulator to weaken news production at the public broadcaster and to push CBC/Radio-Canada toward providing critical local news/programming via the still unregulated side of the business (online) is very difficult to make sense of.

18. Again, it helps to keep in mind how important local news/programming is to people across the country. In the CRTC’s own survey, 81% of those who took part said local news – a huge part of what CBC/Radio-Canada delivers – is most important to them, followed by Canadian national news (78%), documentaries (72%) and international news (68%).<sup>23</sup> And as mentioned, the 2019 Communications Monitoring Report showed “traditional television viewing still far exceeds viewing of Internet-based television.”<sup>24</sup> Why then would the regulator provoke the removal of this service by the public broadcaster in the areas where large number of Canadians live.

## **Setting the record straight – The truth about CBC/Radio-Canada’s dismal record in supporting its quality local news services**

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19. In removing CBC Radio-Canada’s weekly minimum hours required for local television news/programming, the CRTC states: “the Commission is confident that the CBC will continue to broadcast local programming that is predominantly news in both the English- and French-language metropolitan markets. Accordingly, the Commission finds that imposing a condition

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<sup>22</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html> - 3(1)(i)(ii) and 3(1)(m)(ii)

<sup>23</sup> Let’s Talk TV: Quantitative Research Report <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/publications/reports/rp140424.htm#t6>

<sup>24</sup> Communications Monitoring Report - <https://crtc.gc.ca/pubs/cm2019-en.pdf>

Traditional television and Internet-based television (Page 166)

of licence relating to the broadcast of local programming in metropolitan markets is not necessary for the CBC to achieve the above-noted outcome”<sup>25</sup>.

20. It is difficult to understand where the CRTC’s stated confidence comes from. Here is what we know for a fact: In 2020, at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic in Canada – when everyone was struggling to grasp the scope and severity of the situation – suddenly, all local CBC television newscasts were pulled off the air. There was an immediate public outcry. Canadians from all walks of life were shocked and made it known. Local coverage gradually returned, but it took about 8 months before supper, late and weekend television news was restored.
21. Two years earlier, in 2018, CMG members were astounded when the public broadcaster decided not to show Ontario municipal election results live on television.<sup>26</sup> Pointing out that the majority of people watch elections on television, Ottawa newsroom staff wrote to the employer asking: “What does it say about our priorities as a public television broadcaster that on the one night where local politics takes centre stage, we are missing in action?” They added that “many of our viewers in the Ottawa region, who either cannot afford internet access, don’t have ready access to it, or who are not inclined to watch election newscasts online, will not be able to watch live coverage of the local election results provided by their public broadcaster.”<sup>27</sup> CBC-TV has decided to air a new episode of Murdoch Mysteries in the timeslot when elections results were coming in.
22. In CMG members’ experience, there have been steady cuts to news over the years at CBC/Radio-Canada. Instead of investing to support original news programming, there have been program repetitions; radio on television; fewer and fewer reporters; and numerous other issues. CBC workers work very hard to provide high-quality journalism, but there are fewer of them to dig up stories, cover municipal meetings, or do newsgathering and reporting in the community. Local television news have been poorly resources for many years now. This is why CMG continues to fight for better federal funding of CBC/Radio-Canada, and better investment in local news and programming by the Corporation’s management.
23. Therefore, the removal of conditions requiring CBC/Radio-Canada to provide minimum hours of local television news/programming in metropolitan centres is likely to exacerbate the problems outlined above thus weakening local news production and services in those

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<sup>25</sup> [Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-165 and Broadcasting Orders CRTC 2022-166 and 2022-167](#) (paragraph 459)

<sup>26</sup> CBC staff push back as broadcaster opts not to air live coverage of Ontario municipal elections  
[CBC staff push back as broadcaster opts not to air live coverage of Ontario’s municipal elections - The Globe and Mail](#)

<sup>27</sup> CBC staff push back as broadcaster opts not to air live coverage of Ontario’s municipal elections  
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/article-staff-push-back-as-cbc-ottawa-opts-not-to-air-live-coverage-of/>

communities and beyond. In our view, the regulator’s goal should be to put in place measures to strengthen valued local news services, not to incentivize CBC/Radio-Canada to move it to the unregulated internet.

24. Indeed, we agree with the concerns around accountability raised by **CRTC Vice-Chair Caroline J. Simard who writes in her dissenting opinion:**

“Consider as an example the subject of news in a general sense. This was the topic that generated the most comments in this public process (53% of the 10,000 interventions received). There was much praise in regard to the relevance and quality of the CBC’s English- and French-language services, both on radio and television. On the other hand, serious problems relating to the CBC’s mandate were also raised. There are many examples. Certain interveners indicated that they do not have access to signal reception from CBC radio stations, while others did not have access to news reports at the beginning of the pandemic. Canadians called for the Commission to intervene so that they have access to news that is relevant and reflects them on a regular basis. Intervenors expressed concerns over budget cuts and exhibition hours for local, regional and national news for the next licence term. Consequently, without a condition of licence requiring minimum thresholds for hours of exhibition of local programming, including news, in metropolitan areas or expenditures for local programming in the majority decision, how can the CBC be held accountable? Relying on the power of public opinion to ensure compliance seems, in my view, insufficient given the potential responsibilities and consequences at stake. In addition, it is reasonable to anticipate confusion and a lack of predictability, including from the main stakeholder, the CBC. In short, it is my view that the design of the hybrid exhibition-expenditure approach in the majority decision has given the national public broadcaster a degree of flexibility that, without measurable and pre-established benchmarks, may create problems of interpretation during the next licence term and at the next licence renewal.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dissent CRTC Commissioner Monique Lafontaine (Ontario) –

iv) *The Canadian Programming Exhibition Framework Approved in the Majority Decision Sets Out No Minimum Weekly Local Programming Obligations in the French- and English language Metropolitan Markets Across Canada - Pages 260-263*

<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2022/2022-165.pdf>

## **Branded content (“Tandem”) undermines high standard and quality of the national broadcaster as a trusted source of reliable news**

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25. BD CRTC 2022-165 did not require CBC/Radio-Canada to stop using branded content on its platforms. This issue also goes to the heart of quality news services provided by the public broadcaster. We believe that paid content that is supposed to look like news has no place at CBC/Radio-Canada as we told the CRTC when we appeared at the hearing in January 2021.<sup>29</sup> Branded content goes too far and undermines the hard work of CBC workers who focus every day on providing quality reliable news to the public.
26. While CMG supports advertising on CBC/Radio-Canada, we believe that in this era of disinformation and misinformation, there is no place for “Tandem” on the public broadcaster’s news service platforms. CBC/Radio-Canada needs stronger conditions from the regulator regarding branded content.

## **Conclusion and Relief Requested**

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27. CMG respectfully requests, for the reasons given above, that Cabinet grant our petition, and refer back the CBC/Radio-Canada Licence Renewal decision for reconsideration and hearing and to include in the details of its order the information we have provided in this document.
28. CMG further requests that should the Governor in Council choose to grant our petition, it includes special clarifications in its order about the importance of maintaining the new conditions issued in BD CRTC 2022-165, requiring the national public broadcaster to include and reflect Canadians in their full diversity, in its workforce and in its programming - as those requirements are not only necessary, long overdue and an important step forward, but they are also a priority for Canadians, media workers and the country as a whole.

\*\*\*End of Submission\*\*\*

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<sup>29</sup>CMG advocates for quality news, diversity at CBC license renewal hearing  
<https://www.cmg.ca/en/2021/01/27/cmg-advocates-for-quality-news-diversity-at-cbc-license-renewal-hearing/>