

February 15th, 2016

Danielle May-Cuconato  
Secretary General  
CRTC  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N2

Dear Ms May-Cuconato

**Re: Local 830M Final Submission to BNOC 2015-421 - A review of the policy framework for local and community television programming**

I would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to make an oral presentation to BNOC 2015-421 on January 28, 2016.

After reviewing many of the presentations during the hearing stage I would like to make this final submission.

*January 28th Intervenor #1288*

1. While agreeing with the salient points of the National Unifor intervention and presentation I would like to address some of the points it raised.
2. I agree the Commission should look to new sources of funding by removing the digital exemption for OTT providers like Google and Netflix and re visit the idea of carriage fees.
3. I do not agree, as the exchange between Randy Kitt and Commissioner MacDonald (6008, Jan 28th, transcript), may have suggested, that

'any job is a good job'. This would imply that Canada's media workers should be happy to move from professional and professionally compensated program production and broadcast jobs that serve Canadians and the public interest by creating high-quality programming, to any other job in broadcasting or community cable. That is not why I have pursued a career in broadcasting, and I do not believe that is why my colleagues in Unifor have done so.

4. In fact, I have some personal experience with the idea that 'any job is a good job', because I was directly involved with bringing Roger's OMNI operations employees, and several years later Rogers OMNI editorial employees, into our bargaining unit. It became clear during this process that Rogers under-paid its multicultural employees, undervaluing their services compared to equivalent services and positions with CITY. In both cases the Union reluctantly agreed to pay scales that were years below these employees' levels of experience – just to come to an agreement with Rogers, and to give our colleagues certainty. Yet - even with this major concession on our part – many of these new Union members were paid dramatically more under the terms of our collective agreement than in Rogers non-union relationship: in some cases 30 to 40% more.
5. Rogers has fired many of these new union members by reducing and then shutting down the important ethnic news programs they contributed to. The CRTC has effectively stood by and watched this happen, by not imposing the conditions of licence we asked for, and then saying it could do nothing about the cancellation of news on OMNI because those conditions of licence were missing. In May 2013 I saw so many of my colleagues who worked in OMNI's Cantonese and Man-

darin programming receive their first Union-negotiated pay check along with their severance pay.

6. In thinking about the idea that 'any job is a good job', and that people who work at TV stations today can just move to cable community channel jobs, I think the question to ask is this: knowing that an experienced camera operator for a Vancouver Television station makes \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year, will broadcasters commit to pay a news camera operator in one of their community channel news operations this or close to this level? If not – how will shifting local television programming from TV stations to community cable operations strengthen Canada's broadcasting system?
7. Such a move will strengthen broadcasters' bottom line – but it will do nothing for employment opportunities.
8. I would also like to address some of the points raised during Commissioner Molnar's questioning of my evidence.

### **Local Presence**

9. When you review the positions contained in my evidence of union membership you can see that there has been a dramatic reduction of feet on the street journalist, videographers, camera operators, writers, editors and production crew.
10. Rogers has not had 24/7 news coverage since July 2006. In fact there is no one covering news between 5:30pm and 2am every weekday, and between 4:30pm Friday and 9am Sunday every week.

11. Rogers operated a news bureau in Victoria for a couple of years, but closed it in September 2015, presumably with the CRTC's consent because otherwise it would be in violation of condition of licence 2014-399.
12. The number of "human resources" used to create 17.5 hours of local programming in Breakfast Television has dramatically changed at CITY in Vancouver. Where forty six (46) members produced the same hours of programming for one TV licence in 2006, twenty six (26) members are now producing more hours of programming in 2016 for two TV licences, CKVU & CHNM.
13. On the subject of feet on the street vs control from Toronto I understand that Canada's broadcasting legislation supports employment throughout the broadcasting system across Canada and not just in centralized production centres.
14. This is why local stations hold individual licences to serve their local communities. They should be able to provide local news services independent of a central production facility. Local news production is very different than the more technical function of master control and should originate live from the communities they are licensed to serve.
15. Important editorial decisions should be made in the Communities where the broadcast licence is held and not from another province. In Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg the role of News Director has been replaced by a Program Manager who is not directly involved in important programming decisions.

16. Under the proposed definition of local presence in CRTC Exhibit 1, a Company like Rogers could produce a show at a central location, like Toronto, and have 5 minute local news cut ins from Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg. How would this serve Canadians need for locally relevant news programming, reducing these individual broadcast licences to bare-bones news bureaus.
17. Local presence must consider how many people are involved in producing material for the size of the community; how many original local stories are produced every day; is the programming prepared and presented locally? Without these definitions as a condition of licence Vancouver could be covered by a single videographer reporting into a Toronto show.
18. Allowing the local news definition to include category 2a)(Analysis and Interpretation) would allow local TV operations to reduce their news programming to current affairs, talk shows that are studio based which would lead to the lay off of hundreds of on-the-street news gatherers and present a far narrower view of events for Canadians.
19. Rogers' position that Category 2a programming allows them to focus on local news is misleading (5603-5605, Jan 28th transcript). How do you improve your local news coverage by reducing the reporters and camera operators who are in the communities they are reporting on?
20. The real point is this: news does not just come to a TV studio to sit down and be interviewed. News must often be chased down, pursued, and caught.

21. To have Category 2a without Category 1 is really putting the chicken before the egg. How can you analyze and interpret something you have no first hand experience from reported news? If you weren't there, you're reporting second and third hand information. Canada's multi cultural communities deserve much more than a cable-talk-show to reflect matters that are important to them.

### **Local News Fund**

22. This fund should support the creation of local news but also reward and fund innovation in Canadian local news programming. Local, original, daily, in-house news programming.

23. News programming aimed at multi platform delivery. Perhaps a traditional news story that when accessed on a computer, tablet or smartphone could give the viewer the option of three (3) minute or six (6) minute version and an additional link to longer interviews included in the story.

24. Third party governance and transparency are important principals to ensure this fund is credible and does not become an industry slush fund or an arm to the government. Unifor could participate in this process and could work with other groups like the Canadian Association of Journalists.

25. The CRTC is potentially creating a situation where large vertically integrated companies are discouraged from investing in unregulated programming in the digital realm vs the LNF subsidized programming

which is based on the “old bridge” model. This would essentially create a bridge with two lanes: a toll lane, paying it’s fair share through government regulation, able to access tax credits and LNF dollars; and the fast no-toll lane for over the top content providers like Netflix and Google, who fly past everyone else because the CRTC is turning a blind eye to what they are doing.

*Quotes from hearing transcripts:*

6008 MR. KITT: I think that would be great if whoever offers local professional quality journalism would be great as long as it is that. But I didn’t hear the willingness from any of the cable companies to do that this week so far. But wherever those jobs are if it’s good quality professional journalism and it’s on the air or on any number of platforms and there’s a job there that would be good, yes.

5603 MS. WATSON: Let me speak to the elephant in the room. The issue with OMNI was content and format. And so we replaced the traditional newscasts in Ontario and in Vancouver with current affairs programs that, using my expertise on the local level, I felt would enhance local engagement with those communities.

5604 So rather than spend eight minutes, ten minutes of the newscast from New Delhi or from Shanghai, we would focus on Markham and the Chinese population there, or the gun violence in the Sikh community in Surrey.

5605 And so that’s what we intended to do. Yes, it’s much less expensive to do than the other way. But I want to be clear that they still have a voice. They have a voice every day, day in, day out, for 30 minutes every day like they used to. The format changed, but the opportunity and the delivery and the focus on local was still, if I can be so bold to say, enhanced with the change.