



CCSA

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Systems Alliance**

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CCSA Final Submission

Hearing 2024-288

**The Path Forward –Defining “Canadian program” and supporting the
creation and distribution of Canadian programming in the audio-
visual sector**

June 23, 2025

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
The Commission’s RFI and Responses	4
Q 1b.....	4
Q 1c.	4
Q34.....	4
Response to Other Intervenors RFI interventions	4
Large VIs Want Out of Community Programming (to support local news).....	5
CACTUS.....	5
Vice Chair Theberge	6
Vice Chair Scott	9
Outcomes Sought by CCSA	10
Definition of What a Community Programmer Is and Accessing Potential Funding.....	10
Community Programming as a Service of Exceptional Importance	11
Funding to Offset Losses for Independent BDUs.....	11
CMF Management of the Fund.....	12
Regulatory Rationale	12
Policy Direction 2023-239.....	12
New Broadcasting Act s3(1)(s)	13
Market Realities	14
Conclusion	14
Appendix 1: Examples of Video Games supported by the CMF	15
Appendix 2: Proposed Metrics Measurement Criteria for Community Programming	17

Executive Summary

- ES 1 The Canadian Communication Systems Alliance is a national organization representing more than 100 small independent broadcasting distribution companies and ISPs who provide TV, internet, and telecommunications services to over half a million Canadian residents and businesses in urban and rural communities—from coast to coast to coast.
- ES 2 The CCSA thanks the Commission for holding this extensive process to reevaluate what “Canadian program” means as we surpass the first quarter of the 20th century. There have been a lot of questions asked by both the Commission and interveners, and now in this final section, CCSA hopes to facilitate the Commission by addressing the remaining questions that it can contribute to. It will also outline the outcomes that it believes will enable the Commission to best fulfil its mandate and direction.
- ES 3 The CCSA is breaking its final submission into four sections. The first is to respond to comments and questions from the Commission’s RFI¹. The second section is to respond to other intervenors’ oral presentations and questions from Commissioners that the CCSA would like to give comment on. Third is the outcomes from this hearing CCSA would prefer. Finally, CCSA provides its rationale for its positions.
- ES 4 The CCSA is seeking to have the Commission deem the community element a Service of Exceptional Importance. These services being distinct from the historically classified 9.1(1)h services by the local nature of the Community element as opposed to the national importance of the must-carry services.
- ES 5 Once deemed a service of exceptional importance, CCSA would propose that the CMF fund the community element on a per-channel basis, requiring a minimum of 1600 hours of content while meeting the majority of objectives of 3(1)s of the Broadcasting Act to access funding. This would allow those providing the community elements across the country to understand the expectations of meeting those policy objectives.
- ES 6 The CCSA is proposing one potential funding avenue through the CMF. If the Commission has an alternative funding system it deems more prudent to meet the needs of the community element, CCSA welcomes a solution to the current at-risk nature for this objective of the Broadcasting Act.

¹ Requests for Information regarding the proceeding BNC 2024-288-4. Dated May 29, 2025

The Commission's RFI and Responses

Q 1b. Which undertakings (foreign and domestic) should contribute to the SEIF? What criteria should the Commission take into account when considering whether an entity should contribute?

A. CCSA would propose that all licensed BDUs, and online streamers (of sufficient size²) should have to contribute to the SEIF, whether domestically or foreign owned. Uniformity of regulation would strengthen the Commission's arguments about an agnostic and fair system.

Q 1c. Would the SEIF replace the current 9.1(1)(h) of the *Broadcasting Act* funding model for these services?

A. CCSA supports the replacement of the current 9.1(1)h funding model to support those must-carry services. As the current system adapts to market realities, there must be a stable and reliable approach for key policy objectives from the Act to be met. The existing system, while well-intentioned, is a product of a time before the streaming of content and must be modernized before there is a complete collapse. Such modernization should also apply to the funding of must-carry services, so long as they are services of exceptional importance.

Q34. In order to identify programming that is representative of the cultural diversity in Canada, should the Commission work with an organization to collect relevant information and coordinate the identification of reflective programming? If so, what organization would be the best positioned to fulfill that mandate? What safeguards should be in place, and what information should be collected?

A. In CCSA's view, two organizations are (jointly) the only ones the Commission should consider. FRPC has a clear expertise in data gathering, extrapolation, and presentation. Its requests for increased data gathering during this process clearly make it relevant for involvement. Alongside FRPC, PIAC, as a legal charity, should also be included as a consideration, given its mandate and history working for groups needing representation and diversity of voices.

Both organizations have no opportunity to directly benefit from the information being gathered. While each brings distinct benefits, combined, they would make the ideal partners for the Commission to work with.

Response to Other Intervenors RFI interventions

1 In response to submissions by other intervenors, CCSA would note two it is compelled to comment on.

2 In Rogers' submission, paragraph 41 quotes the Commission's 2024-121 decision, paragraph 33, to attempt to sway the Commission into not requiring base contributions on online undertakings controlled by traditional broadcasting groups. CCSA suggests that Rogers fails to have accounted for paragraph 34 of that same decision:

² Making \$25M in revenues exclusively from broadcasting streaming services in Canada.

“The Commission will consider how to fine-tune the contributions of all broadcasters, including consideration of their affiliated online undertakings, as it moves forward with implementing the amended *Broadcasting Act*.”³

3 CCSA supports Eastlink’s position in its RFI that:

“...it is essential that the Commission take steps to equalize the regulatory burdens imposed on BDUs and DTC services by either imposing CPE/contribution requirements on DTC services that are commensurate with BDUs’ large contribution level (as outlined above) or lowering BDUs’ regulatory burden to match the level of CPE/contribution requirements imposed on DTC services.”⁴

However, CCSA intends to address this issue more in the 2025-2 sustainability hearing.

Responses to Other Intervenors and the Oral Hearing

Large VIs Want Out of Community Programming (to support local news)

- 4 CCSA’s members appreciate the costly nature of doing local and community programming. It is admirable that Bell and Rogers want to focus their resources on a democratic priority for Canadians.
- 5 CCSA is aware that its members who are currently providing community programming (aside from local news services) want to continue to do so, and in some cases expand their areas of coverage to provide the other elements of s3(1)s(ii),(iii), (iv), and where applicable (v). CCSA’s members do not have the financial resources to pick and choose where they spend their money in their community programming because they are unable to absorb losses the way VI-BDUs can. It’s a matter of either being ‘in’ or ‘out,’ and our members tell us they want to be ‘in’, but they require assistance to continue to do so.
- 6 The CCSA believes community programming is a significant policy objective in the Broadcasting Act and should be appropriately funded through supports.

CACTUS

- 7 CACTUS during oral comments stated that only not-for-profits (NFPs) could produce community programming. In our view, the community element is outlined in the definitions section of the Broadcasting Act, and specifically includes NFPs. The language is inclusive. NFPs certainly can be community programmers and broadcasters, however, they do not own an exclusive license in the Act.
- 8 CACTUS also claimed community programmers could only serve one community at a time, and that any greater coverage would be regional programming from a central location, and often too far for the community element to reach. CCSA disagrees based on some member examples, such as Westman Communications, a for-profit BDU, which has three community channels that can cover extended communities in the delivery of their programming. Similarly, Access Communications does do some regional content (e.g., election coverage), but also does community and local coverage. CCSA would

³ CRTC BRP 2024-121 paragraph 2024-121

⁴ Eastlink response to CRTC 2024-288-4 RFI – page 12, paragraph 2

note that nowhere in s3(1)s does it require community programming to be broken down by geographic region. Though s3(1)s(iii) does state reflection of community (alongside regions, etc.), that community element might not necessarily be geographic at all.

- 9 Finally, CACTUS proposed a fund of \$70M to be a Community Media Access Fund (CMAF). CCSA agrees with the idea of significant financial resources being directed to community programming and proposed that \$80M should be devoted to the objectives of the community element, with those monies being provided through the CMF.

Vice Chair Theberge

“At-Risk”

- 10 While there were a lot of questions surrounding 'at-risk' content, the Vice-Chair of Broadcasting outlined her views that children's content, Official Language Minority Content, and Indigenous content were 'at-risk' in her conversations with Rogers and Blue Ant.
- 11 The Commission's RFI (2024-288-4) question 23 sought to clarify what 'at-risk' should mean. The CCSA believes there are two fundamental elements to be considered by the Commission.
- 12 The potential audience is the first concern. Many interveners early in the hearing discussed the potential audience markets of Canada (40M) compared with global markets (10B). This could open the conversation to the wider question of whether content made for the 10B people, as compared to domestically, needs any support. It was implied by interveners that drama/comedy and children's content, if made in Canada, should be sold abroad as well. To that end, CCSA will assume that it is going to continue to be acceptable to financially support content that is made for Canada with commercial value globally.
- 13 CCSA would suggest that children's content, while evergreen, is globally appealing. Parents want wholesome entertainment for their children, and Canadian content has long been the gold standard of children's content. But it has to be easily accessible by children's audiences.
- 14 There is a potentially huge market for this content, unlike other content, including community programming.⁵ The potential to find audiences and funding might require a different approach from the traditional, but intrinsically, children's content cannot be at-risk because it's a competitive market with huge potential for financial rewards. Healthy and innovative competition should not, in and of itself, be conflated with being in danger of collapse.
- 15 Conversely, community programming is clearly in danger of collapse. As an example, CCSA has one for-profit member who used to serve 27 communities and has had to reduce this to just three communities over the years because of the losses associated with making such content. Before the end of this decade, the member expects that this number will fall to zero. The desire to make content is strong, but it can not be made at a loss indefinitely. It would be a 'win' for CCSA's members if they were to at least break even on making community content at this point. Some of CCSA's members

⁵ Which can include Indigenous content, and third language minority group content, 3(1)s(iii).

would expand their community element if they could be assured they would not lose money in doing so. Community content won't be sold internationally to derive extra profits; its sole purpose is to meet the objectives of the Act and to help local communities be reflected.

- 16 To CCSA, 'at-risk' is not about competing against other foreign producers or a lack of interest in the content from audiences. It's about the content being financially unsustainable, even when it is made and there's an audience for it. Pivoting to a new distribution medium won't help community programming. It is 'at-risk' despite being important in the Broadcasting Act. It is 'at-risk' by the very nature of its content as intrinsically unprofitable as defined in the Act⁶, but is vital to cultural identity.
- 17 The second critical issue for the Commission to consider is the regulatory importance of the programming in question. With the recent update of the Broadcasting Act, any direct or specific reference to children was removed, while other elements of the Broadcasting Act were added and strengthened. There was no previous definition of the 'community element' in the former Act, although there is now. And section 3(1)s now outlines the purpose of the programming from the community element.
- 18 Further to this, the policy direction did not mention children, kids, or 'all ages', but did reference community broadcasters in 12j.⁷
- 19 CCSA recognizes the regulator can view 'at-risk' as broadly or narrowly as it likes, however, it must prioritize the outcomes the government has indicated it wants in both policy direction and revisions to the Broadcasting Act.

"The Jam"

- 20 The CCSA did notice the analogy used by the Vice-Chair in her query about the Shaw Rocket Fund. CCSA applauds the Vice-Chair for recognizing a very reasonable concern – 'spreading the jam too thinly'. CCSA agrees with this assessment. It believes the CMF currently spreads itself too thin with the spending from the available (limited) funds that should logically go to the broadcasting industry, but which are being used for the videogames industry. This will be discussed more in the next section.

Cultural Relevance

- 21 CCSA believes local/community programming (including news) is significantly relevant to Canadian identity. Whether it is coverage of the lobster festival in Pictou, Nova Scotia, or of youth hockey in Brandon, Manitoba, this is undeniably Canadian content, not foreign content. Since Canada is a tapestry that reflects the diverse contributions of various groups, local/community content should be viewed as the threads that comprise a part of the tapestry – community content is thus culturally relevant to the nation.
- 22 In terms of regional content, if it's regional news of a train derailment or a major forest fire, it is culturally relevant and Canadian. If it informs a larger geographic area of the story, identity, or

⁶ s3(1)s(i),(ii) Broadcasting act 1991 – by making content for small or niche (non-mass) audiences

⁷ Order Issuing Directions to the CRTC (Sustainable and Equitable Broadcasting Regulatory Framework) SOR/2023-239 <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2023-239/page-1.html>

strengthens the area as a community, it is relevant.⁸ In a national sense, stories that look inward or give context to the Canadian perspective for international issues can have cultural relevance. Because Canada is not a hegemony or monolith, how national or international stories⁹ are portrayed might not always have cultural relevance for all or even the majority of groups in the country.

- 23 As PIAC pointed out in its oral submission, the Act is clear about the CRTC's responsibilities. Broadly speaking, the Commission has a responsibility to ensure content relevant to Canadians is made. When a question of cultural relevance was put to Irene Berkowitz, she understandably hesitated about whether a 'space story' could be Canadian. It can be, but it doesn't mean it is by default. A story about the International Space Station when astronaut Chris Hadfield was onboard likely could be Canadian, but if the story was during a time when no Canadians were involved, it may not have cultural relevance. Relating to the aforementioned 'jam' analogy, mentioning the Canadarm, really is spreading the Canadian relevance exceptionally thin.
- 24 To this end, CCSA has concerns regarding the funding of Video Games. The CMF is financing a considerable amount of video games through funding envelopes every year, many of which have little or no cultural relevance whatsoever.¹⁰ At least some of those games are then put on distribution platforms¹¹ that are very popular for distribution, but which take a financial cut of 30% for every game sold. This means taxpayers and the broadcasting industry are paying millions of dollars for games like "Legend of the Samurai" to be made and distributed, where every copy of the game sold gives a foreign company 30% of the profits received. This seems to be at odds with the intended funding philosophy.
- 25 CCSA believes that if the Commission is to define cultural relevance for the broadcasting industry, it must be mindful of where the funds from the broadcasting industry are going and who is gaining access to them. This is especially important when there is, as the CMF stated in its oral submission, "a limited pot of money and a line needs to be drawn" when responding to a question from Commissioner Naidoo about news. CCSA proposes a definition of 'cultural relevance' to be adopted by the Commission as:

"Of demonstrable intrinsic value to the growth, exploration of, or significance of identity and experiences for Canadians at a local, regional, national, or international level."

Metrics

- 26 Having a proposed definition of what cultural relevance is, CCSA will be able to address other questions for which the Vice-Chair sought answers.
- 27 CCSA's members believe metrics should be reflected based on contributions as defined in the Act. They should be based upon whether community programmers are attempting to or are meeting the

⁸ Like the coverage of a provincial election.

⁹ Whether comedies, dramas or news

¹⁰ A randomly selected cross-section of those games will be in Appendix 1, with descriptions included when they could be ascertained. The CCSA was intending to read the list at the hearing, but thought it might cause problems for the live translation services.

¹¹ Including Steam

objectives of s3(1)s. CCSA has outlined in an Appendix at the end of this document clear criteria the Commission could adopt.

- 28 CCSA proposes that if financial stability is achieved to ensure survivability for the “community element,” geographic metrics could be established over time to ensure all regions are represented. CCSA would welcome and seek to facilitate the gathering of information for the Commission at that point.

Vice Chair Scott

- 29 In the oral presentations, CCSA noted the Vice-Chair Telecommunications sought a definition of market failure with Shaw Rocket Fund (SRF), and further understanding of those issues with PIAC.

Definition of ‘Market Failure’

- 30 Market failure cannot be simply viewed as “a lack of funding.” First, defining the market is of particular relevance. There is the question of whether the market should be defined by regulation or by audience interest. If it is the latter, then the Vice-Chair’s point to SRF about audience preferences being distinct from market failure is an accurate assessment. Similarly, as aforementioned, if the industry is unwilling to successfully engage audiences where they reside, that cannot be deemed a market failure.¹²

- 31 In comparison, if a given market is regulated into existence with specific objectives and limitations, and there is a lack of funding to meet those goals, it should be considered a market failure. Hypothetically, if there are no Canadians creating comedy programming in 2027, that would not objectively cause a failure of a designated market or requirement under the Act because “entertainment” and “interests” in section 3(1)i(i) of the Act are not defined, and there is no specific reference to comedy.¹³ Conversely, section 3(1)e states:

“each **element** of the Canadian broadcasting system **shall contribute** in an appropriate manner to the **creation and presentation of Canadian programming.**”¹⁴ (emphasis added for effect)

This is similar but distinct from s3(1)a.1:

“(a.1) each broadcasting undertaking **shall contribute to the implementation of the objectives** of the broadcasting policy set out in this subsection in a manner that is appropriate in consideration of the nature of the services provided by the undertaking.”¹⁵ (emphasis added for effect)

- 32 Section ‘e’ specifically requires the creation and presentation of programming as opposed to more broadly contributing to the ‘implementation of objectives.’

And section 3(1)s states:

¹² This was raised by Rogers in its oral submission about how there are ample audiences for children’s content on YouTube.

¹³ CCSA is not advocating for Canadian comedy content disappearing from Canadian screens.

¹⁴ Section 3(1)e, Broadcasting Act 1991

¹⁵ Section 3(1)a.1, Broadcasting Act 1991

“(s) the programming provided by the **community element should.**”¹⁶(emphasis added for effect)

- 33 The ‘community element’ is the only defined ‘element’ in the updated Act¹⁷, and it has six objectives under 3(1)s, but the community element must contribute to the creation and presentation of Canadian programming.
- 34 While different component pieces of the community element are not required to meet all the goals under section 3(1)s, the sector of the ‘community element’ has a greater and more specific burden. That distinction is where market failure can be delineated in the flexibility provided for in the Broadcasting Act.
- 35 Having defined and separated the types of market, the Commission can subsequently examine if a failure has occurred. Some Canadian entertainment content is financially viable, and the total amount of financially viable content grows when it is expanded in scope more broadly to include audiences outside of Canada. The broader language of “in a manner that is appropriate in consideration of the services”¹⁸ allows for flexibility in focusing on financially viable parts of the entertainment market. It could be argued that there cannot be a market failure for content under s3(1)(d), 3(1)(i) if elements of it are viable.¹⁹ By comparison, whether narrowly or broadly speaking, for community programming²⁰, the required creation and presentation consistently loses money. There is no opportunity to prioritize the financially viable parts of the market if none exist.
- 36 CCSA would therefore propose two definitions of a market failure. “If regulated requirements create only the opportunities for the loss of revenues by parties to meet all objectives sought of the Broadcasting Act.”, or “If a prerequisite for contributing to those relevant objectives of the Act makes it financially unsustainable for all parties without outside financial assistance.”

Outcomes Sought by CCSA

Definition of What a Community Programmer Is and Accessing Potential Funding

- 37 CCSA would ask the Commission to ensure funding can be achieved by for-profit and not-for-profit Broadcasting Undertakings alike if the community element is to be upheld as noted in the regulations. Further, funding should not be available based on a narrow definition of only serving one community at a time. CCSA would suggest that funding should be available by achieving a preponderance of the objectives within section 3(1)s with a minimum of 1,600 hours of content.
- 38 If the Commission wants to better facilitate Bell and Rogers’ request to do local news, CCSA would propose that any new funding be directed to independent community services exclusively, as they will be the only class of Broadcasting Undertakings left to facilitate the majority of the objectives of the

¹⁶ Section 3(1)s, Broadcasting Act 1991

¹⁷ CCSA notes 3(1)o references “other elements,” but they are not defined.

¹⁸ Section 3(1)a.1, Broadcasting Act 1991

¹⁹ This could mean sports content in Canada, or drama, reality TV, comedy, and children’s content within Canada and with international audiences providing supplemental audiences and revenues regardless of distribution platform.

²⁰ Including section 3(1)s(iii) of the Broadcasting Act 1991.

community element. Alternatively, if Bell and Rogers would prefer to enhance their community programming services, CCSA would ask only that VI-BDU's and the National Public Broadcaster be limited in the maximum amount they would be allowed to withdraw from a fund for those purposes, to ensure the independent BDUs can exist meaningfully in that space as well.²¹

Community Programming as a Service of Exceptional Importance

- 39 Both CCSA and Unifor proposed an expanded definition of Service of Exceptional Importance (SEI) in the oral presentations. CCSA would note that Unifor's example was for a component of community programming: local news. CCSA would suggest a subset of an objective²² cannot reasonably be an SEI without the larger objective also being an SEI.
- 40 CCSA believes the Commission should recognize community programming as a SEI. Given the Act's clear expression of the importance of local/community programming, there should be Services of Exceptional (National) Importance, and Services of Exceptional (Community) Importance. CCSA proposes differentiating community content from 'must-carry' content. The nature of audience scope provides the delineation point for the type of service(s) being provided by community programming as compared to national interest content²³. As a result, CCSA would propose differentiating 'must-carry' and community content through separate funding streams. The CBC-RC is not funded the same way as APTN, and CCSA does not believe community programming needs to be funded the same way as any 'must-carry'. CCSA would suggest the ideal situation is that community programming be funded through a new mechanism or funding stream under the CMF's jurisdiction. As mentioned in previous submissions from the CCSA in this hearing (and on the record in 2025-2), there are monies currently going to other industries providing resources to projects of questionable cultural relevance, that can and should be repurposed to fund required objectives under the Broadcasting Act that are of cultural relevance.

Funding to Offset Losses for Independent BDUs

- 41 CCSA proposes the criteria for seeking funding should be evaluated on a per (community) channel basis, providing video content of a minimum of 1600 hours, whether distributed online or conventionally. The CCSA would welcome a consultation study to be initiated by the Commission on the needs for funding of (independent) community programming channels.
- 42 The CCSA's members are not asking to make tremendous profits on community programming. At a minimum, they simply want to stop incurring unsustainable losses. With stable funding per channel, it would allow members to keep making content or even start serving new communities with new channels with an established 'per channel' rate.

²¹ In keeping with section 3(1)d(iii.5) of the Broadcasting Act 1991.

²² Section 3(1)s(ii)

²³ Like APTN or CBC-NN has far more relevance nationally than content for a community of 20,000 and so must-carry nationally makes far more sense for APTN.

CMF Management of the Fund

43 CCSA believes the CMF is ideally suited to manage the funds for community programmers. It has the resources already available if they are redirected to community programming from services that do not facilitate the needs of the broadcasting industry or have any cultural relevance. The CMF's website has as the "about us" section states:

"We serve as the spark that ignites the sharing of a truly Canadian culture. Our stories. Our triumphs and struggles. Our complex identity."²⁴

Its vision and mandate from its 2023-2024 annual report states:

"The CMF fosters, develops, finances, and promotes the production of Canadian content and relevant applications for all audiovisual media platforms. We guide Canadian content towards a competitive global environment through fostering industry innovation, rewarding success, enabling diversity of voices, and promoting access to content through industry and private sector partnerships."²⁵

44 The CMF in understanding the new regulatory definition (through the Commission) of "Canadian program", and cultural relevance, will need to reassess its own objectives. 'Guiding Canadian content towards a competitive global environment' may be less important to national and regulatory objectives, including cultural sovereignty, than supporting "truly Canadian culture. Our stories. Our triumphs and struggles. Our Complex Identity."

45 CCSA would ask the Commission to work with the CMF to ensure there is sufficient funding for community programming, instead of prioritizing any other audiovisual media platforms, unless they as industries (videogames and social media) contribute financially to the CMF.

Regulatory Rationale

46 CCSAs above positions are based on the work our members are doing, which the government of Canada deems an essential part of the Broadcasting Act, and Policy Direction.

Policy Direction 2023-239

47 In Policy Direction 2023-239, paragraph 5 directs the Commission to "...support the sustainability of community broadcasters..."²⁶²⁷ Section 12(j) of that direction:

²⁴ Found at: <https://cmf-fmc.ca/about-us/>

²⁵ Found at: <https://cmf-fmc.ca/about-us/annual-reports/>

²⁶**Order Issuing Directions to the CRTC (Sustainable and Equitable Broadcasting Regulatory Framework)**

SOR/2023-239. 2023-11-09. Found at:

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2023-239/page-1.html>

²⁷ CCSA would note that in this section, the direction makes a distinction between the community element and services of exceptional importance. That distinction is based on the previous definition having only been applied to 9.1(1)h services previously. CCSA does not believe that 9.1(1)h services can be the only possible interpretation for services of exceptional importance, since the criteria for must-carry (found in paragraph 11 of decision 2010-629) is a two-step process, the first of which is a finding of a 'service of exceptional importance'. CCSA and Unifor have only asked for that designation to apply to the community element after the policy

“ consider the importance of sustainable support by the entire Canadian broadcasting system for news and current events programming, including a broad range of original local and regional news and community programming”²⁸

- 48 And to facilitate results for Indigenous community content (amongst other types of content) through section 14(b)²⁹.

The CCSA’s community programmers range from larger to very small independent BDUs. Its larger members, like Access Communications, provide a voice to Indigenous perspectives and provincial elections across the province of Saskatchewan. There are also smaller Indigenous members who exist and operate solely within their communities providing content. We also have for-profit community programmers as members.

- 49 The policy direction, when viewed in conjunction with the updated Broadcasting Act, directs the Commission to facilitate the sustainability of the community element.

New Broadcasting Act s3(1)(s)

- 50 The previous iteration of the Broadcasting Act referred to community programming two times, 3(1)b, and 3(1)i(iii).³⁰ Further, there was not a definition of the community element. That has fundamentally shifted. Section 3(1)s references the objectives of community programming:

“(s) the programming provided by the community element should

- **(i)** be innovative and complementary to the programming provided for mass audiences,
- **(ii)** cater to tastes and interests not adequately provided for by the programming provided for mass audiences and include programs devoted to culture, politics, history, health and public safety, local news and current events, local economy, and the arts,
- **(iii)** reflect Canada’s communities, regions, Indigenous and multicultural nature, including through third-language programming,
- **(iv)** support new and emerging Canadian creative talent, as a cost-effective venue for learning new skills, taking risks, and exchanging ideas,
- **(v)** through community participation, strengthen the democratic process and support local journalism, and
- **(vi)** be available throughout Canada so that all Canadians can engage in dialogue on matters of public concern.”

- 51 S3(1)s(i) distinguishes its content by being adjacent to, but distinct from the programming for mass audiences.

direction. Further, that the policy direction links the 9.1(1)h’s and the community element should signify that the two points should be of similar importance.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Broadcasting Act 1991, Found at: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/b-9.01/20200701/P1TT3xt3.html>

- 52 S3(1)s(ii) reinforces that point by encouraging the content to fill in the proverbial gaps for content not adequately provided for by mass audience programming. These two points combined necessarily make community programming limited financially.
- 53 S3(1)s(ii) also outlines the kinds of content being created in the community space. While local journalism is a portion of that, and it's further included in 3(1)s(v), it is not necessarily the majority of content expected in this section of the Act. The CCSA does not want to diminish the importance of local news, but must emphasize that it is a component of, not the entirety of s3(1)s. While Large VI-BDUs want to contribute to the community element in that specific way, CCSA's members appreciate the continued importance of other elements of the community section of the Act.
- 54 S3(1)s(iii),(v) are important for reflecting the communities back to themselves, which is critically important to the principle of community programming.

Market Realities

- 55 Market realities for community programming are dire. There are large areas of Canada with little or no community element present in broadcasting, and those with services are declining.
- 56 As Commissioner Paquette noted, CCSA does see the opportunity to remedy the current market forces, but that can only happen with regulatory intervention.

Conclusion

- 57 The CCSA is appreciative of the Commission's efforts during a difficult process. It has to grapple with complex cultural ideas, regulatory and policy concerns, and international interests in what will no doubt be an exceedingly difficult balancing act. CCSA's proposal is designed to facilitate and expedite decisions made around s3(1)s of the Broadcasting Act.
- 58 The main thrusts of the majority of submissions sought protections, better funding, or a positive shift of priorities given a renewed Broadcasting Act. CCSA is seeking better funding and a positive shift of priorities given the modifications of the Broadcasting Act's s3(1)s, and the at-risk nature of the community element. We are optimistic that the Commission will see that there is an appetite for the independent sector to increase its ability to support communities' reflection across the country.

The CCSA thanks the Commission for its consideration during this phase of the process.

Sincerely,



John P. Roman
Director, Legal & Regulatory
Canadian Communications Systems Alliance (CCSA)

Appendix 1: Examples of Video Games supported by the CMF

Below the CCSA submits a very small list from the last three funding cycles of the video games funded by the CMF³¹ with their funding amounts, and when available, the description of the games. CCSA would ask the Commission to assess the value of cultural relevance for such games, and whether their cultural relevance is of more financial value to the CRTC's regulated cultural imperatives in section 3(1)s of the Broadcasting Act.³²

Examples of CMF-funded video games 2024-2025:

"Demon Wars" \$1,250,000 (Combined over two years \$1.5M)

"Blind Samurai" \$250,000

"Legend of the Samurai" \$1,500,000

"Age of Creation" \$154,000

Examples of CMF-funded games 2023-2024:

"Fruit Golf" \$1,101,275 (According to Steam – the game delivery system- the game description is: "In the wacky world of Fruit Golf, your ball is replaced by fruit as you mini-golf your way through ridiculous, larger-than-life courses. Seamlessly blending VR and mobile, Fruit Golf offers a unique and hilarious experience for players of all ages and only requires one headset for the whole party.")

"GreenHeart Necromancer"³³ \$785,262.75 (Combined over two years \$944,880)

"Demon Wars" \$250,000

"Chess World" \$15,000

"Chess Adventure" \$15,000

"Deep Beyond the Reef" \$1,000,000

"Roguevania" \$1,500,000 (According to Steam: "ULTROS is a psychedelic metroidvania where you wake up stranded on The Sarcophagus — a cosmic uterus holding an ancient, demonic being. Trapped in the loop of a black hole, you will have to explore The Sarcophagus and meet its inhabitants to understand the part you play...")

Examples of CMF-funded games 2022-2023:

"Zomben: Robots vs Zombie" \$15,000

"D'Orcs" \$246,843

"Roots of Yggdrasil" \$1,250,000 (According to Steam: "Build settlements, explore the Nine Realms, collect artifacts and upgrade your deck to reach the top of Yggdrasil in this post-Ragnarok roguelike city-builder! Can you survive the end of the world?")

³¹ Source of information: the CMF website listing funded projects by year cross referenced by content type 'game', with the funding stream set as 'interactive media'. https://cmf-fmc.ca/funded-projects/?_fiscal_years=2024-2025&_platform=dm&_project_content_type=game&_funding_streams=interactive-digital-media

³² If a \$1.5M video game could finance approximately 4-6 community channels for a year.

³³ https://store.steampowered.com/app/2127570/Greenheart_Necromancer/

“GreenHeart Necromancer” \$159,618 (According to Steam: “Raise a garden — from the dead! Greenhearth Necromancer is a cozy, witchy, semi-idle game about caring for a balcony garden — living and undead plants alike! Grow cute plants, cast spells, and brew potions, enjoying the chill idle gameplay and balcony ambience throughout your day.”)

“Rooster” \$1,439,000 (According to Steam: “A heartfelt, story-rich casual puzzle adventure celebrating the best of ancient Chinese culture. Explore an exquisitely hand-drawn world with delightful surprises, from cooking, finding hidden objects, paper crafting, and more. Guide Rooster in an emotionally rewarding tale about family and love.”)

In 2023-2024 alone, the CMF funded a total of 134 games, at various levels, with and at 23 of those receiving between \$1M-1.5M.³⁴ The CCSA would question whether the preponderance of those games and resultant funding would meet the criteria of Canadian content/cultural relevance that the Commission is trying to establish.

³⁴ Source of information: the CMF website listing funded projects by year cross referenced by content type ‘game’, with the funding stream set as ‘interactive media’. https://cmf-fmc.ca/funded-projects/?_fiscal_years=2024-2025&_platform=dm&_project_content_type=game&_funding_streams=interactive-digital-media

Appendix 2: Proposed Metrics Measurement Criteria for Community Programming

Success in community programming must be defined not just in terms of audience size or cost-efficiency, but by its community impact, participation, and local relevance. Community media plays a fundamentally different role from conventional or commercial broadcasters — its mandate is not primarily commercial reach, but civic engagement, inclusion, and local storytelling.

CCSA's members believe key indicators of success may include:

- **Community Engagement:** Participation rates from local residents, including volunteers, contributors, and featured community members.
- **Demand for Coverage:** Requests from organizations, groups, or residents for new programming or event coverage (i.e., cultural festivals, city affairs (city council/chamber events), school sports, fundraising telethons).
- **Local Impact:** Testimonials or feedback demonstrating that the content has informed, empowered, or connected community members.
- **Sustainability:** Consistent production and broadcast of new, relevant content over time, even with modest resources.

CCSA is therefore providing three types of metrics for the Commission to assess on, though the Commission may have other criteria to include as well. Depending on the community programmer and/or community served, some of the criteria may be more or less relevant. The CCSA would ask the Commission to be mindful of those local and regional realities.

A. Quantitative Metrics:

- Number of first-run (original) hours of community-produced content aired per year.
- Amount of community-produced content aired per year.
- Number of active volunteers and contributors annually.
- Number of unique community events, cultural gatherings, or issues covered.
- Coverage area growth (i.e., towns served, hours of programming shared across locations).

B. Qualitative Metrics:

- Community testimonials and survey responses.
- Case studies of community impact (i.e., emergency coverage, support for local elections, Indigenous visibility).
- Requests for training, coverage, or replication in other communities.

C. Equity & Access Metrics:

- Representation of underserved or marginalized voices in programming.
- Language diversity in content.
- Accessibility features (closed captioning, ASL interpretation).