



Community Media Advocacy Centre
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OTTAWA, June 20, 2016 – The Community Media Advocacy Centre (CMAC) is undecieved by the new policy framework for local and community television ([2016-224](#)) released by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) on June 15. The CRTC’s decision defunds community TV programming, shields BDUs from any consequences for non-compliance, and eliminates non-profit community television in license zones serving over one million (1M) subscribers. In addition, the new policy renders requirements to reflect Indigenous, ethnic and linguistic minority communities avoidable and at the same time relieves BDUs of the mandate to offer production facilities or compensation for independent producers of access content.

CMAC’s Vice-President Zoë Ludski said, “This policy further prohibits community access to TV programming that is reflective of the local community and subsidizes corporate media.” She added, “CMAC appeared before the CRTC along with a majority of presenters demanding specific guarantees for non-profit community TV. This new policy uses vague language such as ‘encouraged to’ or ‘will be allowed’ to create the feeling that Indigenous, ethnic and linguistic communities will not lose out with a corporate-run model for community TV.”

The new policy reallocates community TV funding in three ways:

ONE--The newly created Independent Local News Fund (ILNF) takes 25% of this money (or .5% of the 2%) to an amount equivalent to \$23.1M;

TWO--BDUs also now have the option to divert *ALL* funds in community stations serving over 1M subscribers to local news production, amounting to 79% of all funds available to community television or \$117.8M; and

THREE--BDUs will additionally have the option to move 50% of the \$18.9M left for community stations serving zones with less than 1M subscribers to for-profit news programs.

Compiled by CMAC, see Appendix 2 - CRTC [2016-224](#).

The CRTC’s decision leaves community TV with guaranteed funding amounting to only \$9.47M: a reduction of 94.5% of original funding. Community TV was previously funded through a mandatory contribution of 2% of revenues of BDUs, equivalent to \$172.2M annually. The new policy also limits access expenditure quotas to 50%. Canadians can now expect to share \$4.9M to produce all community TV access programming in Canada. The intention to defund community TV was evident in the Commission’s framing of the policy review, which included commercial providers’ local news offerings, and the Commission positions this outcome as an improvement.

The CRTC’s decision also eliminates any real consequence for non-compliant BDU-run community TV stations. Under the heading “Non-compliance measures” (Paragraphs 215-18 - CRTC [2016-224](#)), the CRTC mandates monitoring and non-decisional citizen advisory committees, and even offers “exemptions” from requirements in cases of non-compliance. At the same time the Commission blocks the ability for non-profit community groups to apply for the license in zones serving more than 1M where BDUs decide to shutdown the station and divert funds to Local news. CMAC Secretary, Gretchen King observed, “With this new policy, Community groups have no chance if they are denied services or access by BDUs who abuse the policy. The CRTC is guaranteeing community TV in Canada will be corporate-run, under the guise of focusing on local news.” Regarding the outcome of the review, she added, “When any decision benefits only the corporate sector, especially after public consultation, people feel ignored. CMAC will continue to speak out on behalf of those whose voices are already marginalized.”

Visit CMAC’s website www.cmacentre.ca to view our interventions in the policy review for local and community television (under Current Initiatives). For more information please contact: CMAC Secretary, Gretchen King (514) 999-1948 or cmac@riseup.net.