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RECORD SPENDING ON FOREIGN PROGRAMMING BY PRIVATE TV BROADCASTERS
Canada's \$5 billion film and TV industry should be priority – not big Hollywood shows

Toronto – For the sake of the Canadian economy now is the time for TV broadcasters to invest in Canada's film and television industry, instead of spending record amounts buying Hollywood shows.

Yesterday, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) annual report on the state of Canadian private TV broadcasters showed a whopping record spending of \$775 million on foreign programming in 2008, up 7.4% from 2007. Spending on Canadian dramas remained relatively stagnant at \$88 million.

"With governments worldwide recognizing the economic importance of supporting domestic industries, the CRTC should not contemplate letting the big TV broadcasters reduce their Canadian content obligations simply because of their own debt-inducing, expansionist strategy. In view of upcoming TV licence renewals, now, more than ever, the CRTC should not let broadcasters off the hook for investing in Canadian programs -- especially in these economic times," said Stephen Waddell, ACTRA National Executive Director.

In total, Canada's film and TV industry contributes \$5 billion to the Canadian economy and creates over 126 thousand full-time jobs. In contrast, the Canadian auto sector employs approximately 136 thousand Canadians. On Monday, February 16th the CRTC will announce a 'narrowed or reduced focus' for private broadcasters' TV licences 'in light of...the current economic climate.'

"Buying shows like *Access Hollywood* and *Entertainment Tonight* does not help Canada's economy. Private broadcasters are already spending almost 10 times more on foreign programs than on Canadian dramas. The CRTC can't let the big broadcasters ignore Canada's \$5 billion film and TV industry," said Richard Hardacre, ACTRA National President.

ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists) is the national organization of professional performers working in the English-language recorded media in Canada. ACTRA represents the interests of 21,000 members across Canada – the foundation of Canada's highly acclaimed professional performing community.

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Affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)
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