



**On Screen Manitoba**

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**Oral Presentation by On Screen Manitoba  
Regarding Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2013-106 Application by  
Astral Media Inc. (Astral) for authority to change its effective control, and  
control of its licensed broadcasting subsidiaries, to BCE Inc. (BCE) Application  
2013-0244-7**

1. *Monsieur le président, messieurs et mesdames les conseillers, bonjour. Je m'appelle Nicole Matiation, je suis la directrice générale de On Screen Manitoba, l'association professionnelle de l'industrie de production des médias au Manitoba. Nos membres comprennent des individus, des compagnies de productions, des guildes, des syndicats, des fournisseurs de service, des festivals de film et autres organismes et individus ayant un intérêt dans ce secteur au Manitoba.*
2. *Je représente donc plus de 40 compagnies de production et de fournisseurs de service, soit autour de 1500 individus issus des milieux anglophone, francophone, autochtone et multiculturel.*
3. *On Screen Manitoba croit fermement que la diversité linguistique et culturelle de la production indépendante au Manitoba est un atout qui enrichi le système de la radiodiffusion au Canada. Nous sommes préoccupés par la consolidation des diffuseurs au Canada et son impact sur la production en région.*
4. Ultimately, the sale of Astral to Bell would result in the loss of an independent broadcaster -- one less place where independent Canadian producers, whether working in French or working in English, can take their projects. This acquisition has the potential to significantly reduce the diversity of voices on

Canadian airwaves and further limit opportunity for Canadian production professionals in all regions of the country.

5. Canadian communications policy has long recognized the importance of ensuring communications technology and programming serves to connect a country that is characterized by diverse linguistic, cultural and geographic realities. Independent producers who live and work in all regions of Canada play a key role in ensuring diversity of voice on the airwaves.
6. For this reason On Screen Manitoba believes that it is essential to ensure that the tangible and intangible benefits accruing from the sale of Astral to Bell will be disbursed throughout all regions of Canada to the independent production community in both English and French. On Screen Manitoba urges the Commission to impose strong expectations and conditions of licence that will ensure diversity of voice is maintained despite the loss of a broadcaster.
7. On Screen Manitoba applauds Bell for its commitment to establish regional programming development offices; however, in order for these offices to effectively support regionally-originated projects, we encourage the CRTC to place an expectation on Bell that these offices have the appropriate authority, financial and human resources to support both the development and the production of regional programs.
8. To further ensure that any regional programming development offices are effective in supporting the development and production of regionally-originated programs, On Screen Manitoba urges the Commission to place as a condition of Licence (COL) that Bell report annually on development and production expenditures by genre and format and also by province and by territory.
9. While we recognize that Bell has made a commitment to work with all regions of Canada in both French and English to develop and produce Canadian content, we note that historically, CTV, which Bell acquired in 2011, had a

development office in Winnipeg. And, we would like to point out that a regional programming development office located in Vancouver and another in Halifax will do little to improve access and communications for producers and writers located in Manitoba as both locations are in fact physically farther from Manitoba than Toronto or Montreal.

10. On Screen Manitoba asks the Commission to at the very least place an expectation on Bell to ensure regional development executives (for both Anglophone and Francophone holdings) travel at Bell's cost, regularly, to cities throughout the region they are responsible for, including Winnipeg, to work with writers and producers in those communities.
11. In our view, and in light of the rapid evolution of digital technology and its impact on the Canadian media landscape, it seems both reasonable and appropriate to uphold the Commission's recently established group renewal five-year license period.
12. On Screen Manitoba appreciates that Bell is committed to maintaining Astral's PNI and CPE obligations as established under Broadcasting Decisions CRTC 2011-444 and 2012-241. We also value Bell's commitment to devote at least 85% of tangible benefits to on screen initiatives. We appreciate that Bell is placing a high priority on key genres including drama, comedy, long-form documentary and variety for English language production.
13. We do not agree; however, that English language benefits should be disbursed on a different schedule than French language benefits. *Profile 2012: An Economic Report on the Screen-based Production Industry* in Canada states that the 2011-12 production year hit a ten-year high representing a total production volume of almost \$5.9 billion. This includes a 41.4% increase in English-language fiction television production. This is not a moment to slow down investment in development and production but rather to continue to invest in a growing wave of opportunity.

14. On Screen Manitoba believes that tangible benefits should be spent incrementally from the first year of the license period awarded and that the Commission should establish and implement a solid reporting process that demonstrates this; as well as recording development and production expenditures by genre in both official languages, in all provinces and territories of Canada.
15. Further we agree that it would be most efficient to direct all feature film tangible benefits towardsthe Harold Greenberg Fund.
16. On Screen Manitoba represents media production industry professionals working in both official languages and appreciates the unique challenges of both the French language and English Language markets in Canada. We are deeply appreciative of Bell and Astral’s commitment to offer both English language and French language services across Canada and its commitment to do so as a champion of Canadian productions from all regions of Canada and in both official languages. However, we are disappointed with the significant difference in investment between English language and French language feature films. This does not reflect precedent that national funding bodies such as the CMF and Telefilm have set with a one third to the French market and two-thirds to the English market; however, like the CMPA we are not advocating for a reduction in French language benefits in order to increase English language benefits.
17. *On Screen Manitoba apprécie l’attention que Bell met sur la production en français. Nous apprécions que Bell maintienne ses engagements envers le jeune public ainsi que les drames, les comédies, les documentaires et les émissions de variété. Nous notons avec grand intérêt l’initiative de soutenir le développement de nouveaux formats pour la télévision, sachant que les producteurs francophones hors Québec ont des concepts et des approches qui contribuent grandement à la diversification des ondes.*

18. *OSM rappelle que dans la décision 2001-384 portant sur le transfert du contrôle de TVA à Québecor Média inc., le Conseil avait décidé que 10 % des fonds seraient réservés à des compagnies de production de langue française situées à l'extérieur du Québec pour la production d'émissions prioritaires et pour la jeunesse. Sur la base de ce précédent, nous demandons donc au CRTC de mettre en place une CDL pour assurer que 10% des bénéfices destinées aux programmes d'intérêt national prévues pour le marché francophone s'écoule aux producteurs francophones oeuvrant et vivant à l'extérieur du Québec. Leurs voix et leurs histoires jouent un rôle clé dans la francophonie canadienne. Nous notons que cette mesure sert également de calcul dans le cadre de l'accord de contribution entre le Ministère du Patrimoine canadien et le FMC.*
19. On Screen Manitoba appreciates the robust slate of social benefits that Bell has proposed as a further demonstration of their commitment to develop Canadian talent through promotion and training outside of on screen tangible benefits. We are pleased to note that Bell has responded to the APFC and OSM's request to supporting a Francophone film festival outside of Québec.
20. We note; however, that none of the social benefits currently earmarked for film festivals or public education are directed towards organisations within Manitoba. We request that Bell consider disbursing a portion of the social benefits in regard to consumer education to well-established locally-based groups that are carrying out practical media education activities for all ages within their province or territory. In an effort to ensure that social benefits accrue to all regions of Canada we ask the Commission to include annual reporting social benefits expenditures by organization supported as part of the annual reporting COL.
21. On Screen Manitoba appreciates Bell's commitment to the Terms of Trade agreements with the CMPA and the APTFQ as a COL.

22. *On Screen Manitoba apprécie fortement l'intention de Bell d'entrer en discussion avec l'APFC au sujet d'une entente commerciale. Nous considérons que ces discussions et leur conclusion positive seront la preuve d'un profond engagement avec les producteurs indépendants en région. Donc ce sera avec grand intérêt que nous suivrons ces discussions.*
23. The potential acquisition of Astral by Bell represents an important opportunity for the Commission to give priority to the development and production of meaningful Canadian content in both official languages, in all regions of Canada through incentivizing the incremental, documented disbursement of tangible benefits to producers who live and work outside major metropolitan centres.
24. As we stated at the hearing on September 13, 2012, we believe that a COL that directs tangible benefits to support development and production in the regions, in both official languages, as a priority would strengthen regional production and diversity of voice.
25. On Screen Manitoba appreciates Bell's stated commitment to develop, promote and distribute Canadian creative talent along with its commitment to work effectively with independent Canadian producers in all regions of Canada in both official languages through the terms of trade framework.
26. Despite the above commitments, On Screen Manitoba wishes to emphasize four points:
- A transparent annual reporting mechanism that records tangible benefits expenditures by genre, format, budget and region is needed as a COL to allow Canadians to measure and celebrate the success of Bell in developing and promoting Canadian production talent.
  - Second, we believe that setting an expectation that regional programming development offices have clear mandates, authority and resources (throughout the entire license period) to effectively support

regional development and production would help ensure their effectiveness;

- Third, that 10% of tangible benefits earmarked for the French language market should flow to francophone producers living and working outside of Québec as a COL;
- And fourth, that five years represents a reasonable licence term and that all tangible benefits should be paid out in equal annual increments from the beginning of the licence period with regard to both English and French-language markets.

*28. On Screen Manitoba apprécie l'opportunité de partager son avis aujourd'hui. Je suis maintenant prête à répondre à vos questions.*

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