

For Release

April 13th, 2022

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Community media is fighting back

As corporate interests erode journalism across Canada, a coalition has launched a campaign to Rebuild Community Media

(Montreal, QC) - On Tuesday April 5th, a coalition of community media organizations are launching a campaign to engage Canadians in the fight for community media. After decades of corporate capture of communications policy and regulatory frameworks that have laid waste to Canada's media landscape as profits are sent offshore, communities and TV stations across Canada are pressing for changes to rebuild reliable and democratically accountable media. . The campaign seeks to seize opportunities presented by Bill C-11, which proposes major revisions to the Broadcasting Act, to push for a fair deal for community media production.

“Hundreds of community TV stations have closed over the last few decades,” said Cathy Edwards of the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations (CACTUS), a founding member of the new coalition. “A lack of clarity in the Broadcasting Act has led to weak CRTC community TV policy and the opportunity for cable companies to shirk their obligations to community broadcasting—and they took it.”

Canada once had a robust community media sector, with over 300 community television production studios. These provided resources, training programs, and opportunities for aspiring journalists and producers. Small, rural communities were empowered to produce news coverage that mattered to them, including covering town and band council meetings. Community TV was funded through CRTC policy that required big cable companies to give a portion of the revenue to their community stations.

In the early days of cable, providers were mandated to provide at least one channel for community media content, a studio to create this content, and 10% of their revenues (later whittled down to 5%, then 2%, then 1.5% before it was not required at all) to support community TV production. The 1990s saw the conglomeration of cable companies. Over 400 companies became five (Videotron, Shaw, Rogers, Eastlink, & Cogeco). The new regional giants shuttered production studios in smaller communities and paid their own staff to produce the content at the few big-city

channels that remained. Today, despite continuing healthy profits, these media giants redirect the majority of Canada's budget for "community TV" to their own failing private news stations.

It all comes down to the lack of a clear definition for what the "community element" is and does, and its role within our broadcasting system.. Because there's no clarity in legislation, the CRTC and its close ties to industry carry the day. We need Members of Parliament to give the CRTC a strong mandate and a clear definition: Community media is **local, democratic and not for profit**.

What: Website, Lobbying Kit and Petition

When: Going LIVE Wednesday April 13th, 2022

We are asking for:

- Media coverage of our lobbying effort, with focus on the website, petition, and toolkit
- Other not for profit organizations to share our website, petition, and toolkit with their members

More info here: <http://www.rebuildcommunitymedia.ca>

Background on the coalition:

Our coalition is made up of three community media organizations– CACTUS, CUTV, & FedeTVC

[Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations \(CACTUS\)](#) was created to educate consumers and to improve access by Canadians to two specific media services:

- Local media, especially video and television programming
- Media production training and equipment at the local level, especially video and television.

[Community University Television - Concordia \(CUTV\)](#) is Canada's oldest campus based community TV station. CUTV provides training, equipment, and resources to journalists and content producers in order to promote and make accessible local, independent media.

[Fédération des télévisions communautaires autonomes du Québec \(FedeTCA\)](#) promotes the development of autonomous community television (TCA) in Quebec, and promotes cooperation between the members of the association and with the various partners in the community.